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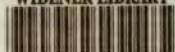
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A HUNTER'S LIFE

IN

SOUTH AFRICA.



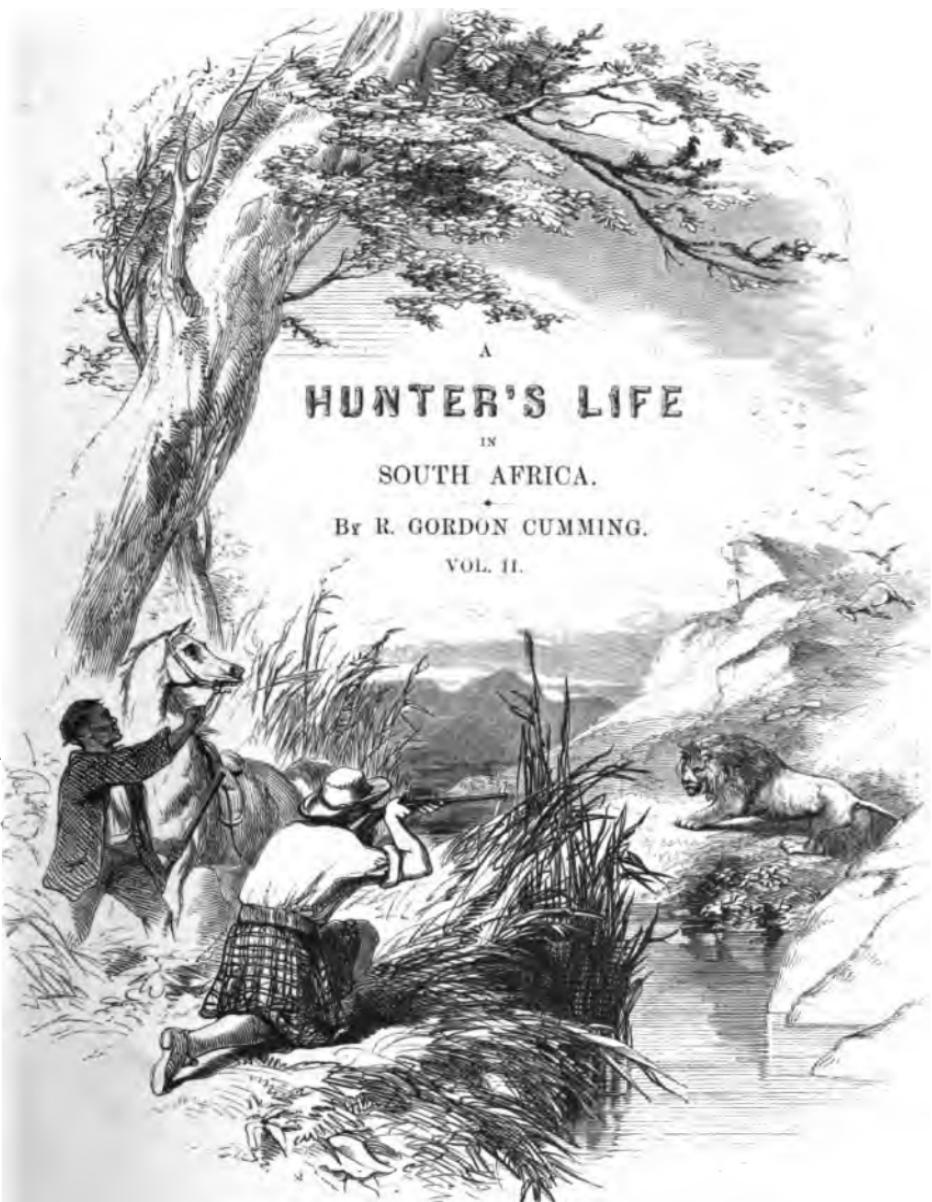
VOLUME II.







A Waltz with a Hippopotamus.



A
HUNTER'S LIFE
IN
SOUTH AFRICA.
By R. GORDON CUMMING.
VOL. II.

JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET.

FIVE YEARS
OF
A HUNTER'S LIFE
IN THE
FAR INTERIOR OF SOUTH AFRICA.

WITH NOTICES OF THE NATIVE TRIBES, AND ANECDOTES OF THE
CHASE OF THE LION, ELEPHANT, HIPPOPOTAMUS,
GIRAFFE, RHINOCEROS, &c.

By ROUALEYN GORDON CUMMING, Esq.,
OF ALTYRE.

With Illustrations.

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FIVE YEARS' HUNTING ADVENTURES IN SOUTH AFRICA.

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I REMAINED at Sabié, hunting elephant and rhinoceros with various success, till the morning of the 22nd of August, when I inspanned, and marched for Mangmaluky, which we reached at sundown, and I drew up my waggons in an open grassy glade on a rather elevated

position, commanding a fine view of the bold outline of the surrounding mountains. On the march I shot a white rhinoceros in the act of charging down a rocky face, with all the dogs in full pursuit of him. The ball disabled him in the shoulder, when, pitching upon his head, he described the most tremendous somersault, coming down among the stones and bushes with the overwhelming violence of an avalanche.

On the 27th I cast loose my horses at earliest dawn of day, and then lay half asleep for two hours, when I arose to consume coffee and rhinoceros. Having breakfasted, I started with a party of the natives to search for elephants in a southerly direction. We held along the gravelly bed of a periodical river, in which were abundance of holes excavated by the elephants in quest of water. Here the spoor of rhinoceros was extremely plentiful, and in every hole where they had drunk the print of the horn was visible. We soon found the spoor of an old bull elephant, which led us into a dense forest, where the ground was particularly unfavourable for spooring; we, however, threaded it out for a considerable distance, when it joined the spoor of other bulls. The natives now requested me to halt, while men went off in different directions to reconnoitre.

In the mean time a tremendous conflagration was roaring and crackling close to windward of us. It was caused by the Bakalahari burning the old dry grass to

enable the young to spring up with greater facility, whereby they retained the game in their dominions. The fire stretched away for many miles on either side of us, darkening the forest far to leeward with a dense and impenetrable canopy of smoke. Here we remained for about half an hour, when one of the men returned, reporting that he had discovered elephants. This I could scarcely credit, for I fancied that the extensive fire which raged so fearfully must have driven, not only elephants, but every living creature out of the district. The native, however, pointed to his eye, repeating the word "Klow," and signed to me to follow him. My guide led me about a mile through dense forest, when we reached a little well-wooded hill, to whose summit we ascended, whence a view might have been obtained of the surrounding country, had not volumes of smoke obscured the scenery far and wide, as though issuing from the funnels of a thousand steamboats. Here, to my astonishment, my guide halted, and pointed to the thicket close beneath me, when I instantly perceived the colossal backs of a herd of bull elephants. There they stood quietly browsing on the lee side of the hill, while the fire in its might was raging to windward within two hundred yards of them.

I directed Johannus to choose an elephant, and promised to reward him should he prove successful. Galloping furiously down the hill, I started the elephants with an unearthly yell, and instantly selected the finest in the

herd. Placing myself alongside, I fired both barrels behind his shoulder, when he instantly turned upon me, and in his impetuous career charged head foremost into a large bushy tree which he sent flying before him high in the air with tremendous force, coming down at the same moment violently on his knees. He then met the raging fire, when, altering his course, he wheeled to the right-about. As I galloped after him I perceived another noble elephant meeting us in an opposite direction, and presently the gallant Johannus hove in sight, following his quarry at a respectful distance. Both elephants held on together, so I shouted to Johannus, "I will give your elephant a shot in the shoulder, and you must try to finish him." Spurring my horse, I rode close alongside, and gave the fresh elephant two balls immediately behind the shoulder, when he parted from mine, Johannus following; but before many minutes had elapsed that mighty Nimrod reappeared, having fired one shot and lost his prey.

In the mean time I was loading and firing as fast as could be, sometimes at the head, and sometimes behind the shoulder, until my elephant's fore-quarters were a mass of gore, notwithstanding which he continued to hold stoutly on, leaving the grass and branches of the forest scarlet in his wake.

On one occasion he endeavoured to escape by charging desperately amid the thickest of the flames; but this did

not avail, and I was soon once more alongside. I blazed away at this elephant, until I began to think that he was proof against my weapons. Having fired thirty-five rounds with my two-grooved rifle, I opened fire upon him with the Dutch six-pounder; and when forty bullets had perforated his hide, he began for the first time to evince signs of a dilapidated constitution. He took up a position in a grove; and as the dogs kept barking round him, he backed stern foremost among the trees, which yielded before his gigantic strength. Poor old fellow! he had long braved my deadly shafts, but I plainly saw that it was now all over with him; so I resolved to expend no further ammunition, but hold him in view until he died. Throughout the chase this elephant repeatedly cooled his person with large quantities of water, which he ejected from his trunk over his back and sides; and just as the pangs of death came over him, he stood trembling violently beside a thorny tree, and kept pouring water into his bloody mouth until he died, when he pitched heavily forward, with the whole weight of his fore-quarters resting on the points of his tusks.

A most singular occurrence now took place. He lay in this posture for several seconds, but the amazing pressure of the carcase was more than the head was able to support. He had fallen with his head so short under him that the tusks received little assistance from his legs. Something must give way. The strain on the mighty

tusks was fair; they did not, therefore, yield; but the portion of his head in which the tusk was imbedded, extending a long way above the eye, yielded and burst with a muffled crash. The tusk was thus free, and turned right round in his head, so that a man could draw it out, and the carcass fell over and rested on its side. This was a very first-rate elephant, and the tusks he carried were long and perfect.

On the 28th I saddled up, and rode for the waggons, steering my course by the lofty pyramidal mountain, in whose vicinity they were drawn up. The remainder of the day was spent in constructing a loading-rod of rhinoceros-horn, and writing up the log. At an early hour on the 29th I started a party of the natives, bearing my impedimenta, to await me at the carcass of the last elephant; and in the forenoon I held thither, accompanied by Johannus. Cantering along through the forest, I came suddenly in full view of one of the loveliest animals which graces this fair creation. This was an old buck of the sable antelope, the rarest and most beautiful animal in Africa. It is large and powerful, partaking considerably of the nature of the ibex. Its back and sides are of glossy black, beautifully contrasting with the belly, which is white as driven snow. The horns are upwards of three feet in length, and bend strongly back with a bold sweep, reaching nearly to the haunches.

This animal was first discovered by Captain Harris, of the Bombay Engineers, in 1837. As I subsequently devoted a great deal of time in the pursuit of this antelope, I shall not here make any remarks concerning him. The one which was now before me was the first I had seen, and I shall never forget the sensations I experienced on beholding a sight so thrilling to the sportsman's eye. He stood with a small troop of pallahs right in our path, and had unfortunately detected us before we saw him. Shouting to my pack, I galloped after him; but the day was close and warm, and the dogs had lost their spirit with the sun. My horse being an indifferent one, I soon lost ground, and the beautiful sable antelope, gaining a rocky ridge, was very soon beyond my reach, and vanished for ever from my view. I then rode on for the carcass of the elephant, where I took up my quarters for the night, but I sought in vain to close my eyelids: the image of the sable antelope was still before me, and I slept little throughout the night.

On the 31st I held south-east in quest of elephants, with a large party of the natives. Our course lay through an open part of the forest, where I beheld a troop of springboks and two ostriches, the first I had seen for a long time. We held for Towannie, a strong fountain in the gravelly bed of a periodical river: here two herds of cow elephants had drunk on the preceding evening, but I declined to follow these; and presently, at a muddy

fountain a little in advance, we took up the spoor of an enormous bull, which had wallowed in the mud and then plastered the sides of several of the adjacent veteran-looking trees. We followed the spoor through level forest in an easterly direction, when the leading party overran the spoor, and casts were made for its recovery. Presently I detected an excited native beckoning violently a little to my left, and, cantering up to him, he said that he had seen the elephant. He led me through the forest a few hundred yards, when, clearing a wait-a-bit, I came full in view of the tallest and largest bull elephant I had ever seen. He stood broadside to me, at upwards of one hundred yards, and his attention at the moment was occupied with the dogs, which, unaware of his proximity, were rushing past him, while the old fellow seemed to gaze at their unwonted appearance with surprise.

Halting my horse. I fired at his shoulder, and secured him with a single shot. The ball caught him high upon the shoulder-blade, rendering him instantly dead lame; and before the echo of the bullet could reach my ear, I plainly saw that the elephant was mine. The dogs now came up and barked around him, but, finding himself incapacitated, the old fellow seemed determined to take it easy, and, limping slowly to a neighbouring tree, he remained stationary, eyeing his pursuers with a resigned and philosophic air.

I resolved to devote a short time to the contemplation of this noble elephant before I should lay him low ; accordingly, having off-saddled the horses beneath a shady tree which was to be my quarters for the night and ensuing day, I quickly kindled a fire and put on the kettle, and in a very few minutes my coffee was prepared. There I sat in my forest home, coolly sipping my coffee, with one of the finest elephants in Africa awaiting my pleasure beside a neighbouring tree.

It was, indeed, a striking scene ; and as I gazed upon the stupendous veteran of the forest, I thought of the red deer which I loved to follow in my native land, and felt that, though the Fates had driven me to follow a more daring and arduous avocation in a distant land, it was a good exchange which I had made, for I was now a chief over boundless forests, which yielded unspeakably more noble and exciting sport.

Having admired the elephant for a considerable time, I resolved to make experiments for vulnerable points, and, approaching very near, I fired several bullets at different parts of his enormous skull. These did not seem to affect him in the slightest ; he only acknowledged the shots by a “ salaam-like ” movement of his trunk, with the point of which he gently touched the wound with a striking and peculiar action. Surprised and shocked to find that I was only tormenting and prolonging the sufferings of the noble beast, which bore his trials with such

dignified composure, I resolved to finish the proceeding with all possible despatch; accordingly I opened fire upon him from the left side, aiming behind the shoulder; but even there it was long before my bullets seemed to take effect. I first fired six shots with the two-grooved, which must have eventually proved mortal, but as yet he evinced no visible distress; after which I fired three shots at the same part with the Dutch six-pounder. Large tears now trickled from his eyes, which he slowly shut and opened; his colossal frame quivered convulsively, and, falling on his side, he expired. The tusks of this elephant were beautifully arched, and were the heaviest I had yet met with, averaging 90 lbs. weight apiece.

On the 1st of September—so full of interest to the British Nimrod—we saddled our steeds and steered our course for Mangmaluky. Cantering along the base of a mountain range, I started two klipspringers, which went bounding up the mountain side with the elasticity of an India-rubber ball, selecting for their path the most prominent points of the large fragments of rock of which the mountain-side was chiefly composed. I shot one of these, being the first of the species I had killed, though in subsequent years, while hunting the sable antelope, I secured a number of fine specimens. This darling little antelope frequents precipitous rocky hills and mountains, and bounds along over

the broken masses of rock with the most extraordinary ease and agility: it may often be seen perched, like a chamois, on the sharp pinnacle of some rock or stone, with its four feet drawn close up together. Its hoofs are different from those of other antelopes, being suited solely for rocky ground, and are so formed that the weight of the animal rests upon their tips. On looking down a precipice I have often seen two or three of this interesting antelope lying together on a large flat mass of rock, and sheltered from the power of the noonday sun by the friendly shade of some sandal-wood or other mountain tree. They are about half the size of the Scottish roebuck, whose winter coat the texture of their hair very much resembles, but it is stiffer and of a yellower colour.

On the afternoon of the 2nd, as I was sitting in my waggon writing up my journal, a koodoo charged past me, closely followed by a pack of hungry wild dogs, which maintained their position although all my kennel joined them in the chase, and, holding on, the wild dogs killed the koodoo just as it reached the water where my oxen drank. On the 3rd I took the field with Johannus and a small party of Bakalahari, and held a northerly direction. After following the spoor of four bull elephants for many miles in a semicircular course, we came up with them in extremely dangerous and unfavourable ground, when I was fortunate enough to secure the finest,

after a severe and dangerous conflict, during which, on three separate occasions, I narrowly escaped destruction. The horse I rode was "Colesberg," which, as usual, capered and balked me when I tried to fire from his back; when I dismounted, he seemed to take a pleasure in jerking my arm as I was taking aim; and on the elephant charging he declined permitting me to regain the saddle. This elephant was a first-rate bull, with large and perfect tusks: he fell within three hundred yards of the fountains, where I found a black rhinoceros which I wounded on the 31st of August. The sun was powerful throughout the day; the months of winter were gone by, and summer was rapidly advancing. The trees were budding and putting forth leaves, which loaded the passing breeze with a sweet and balmy fragrance. In low-lying districts the young grass had already commenced to shoot forth its tender blades, and all nature seemed to pant for the grateful rains to robe herself in her mantle of summer verdure.

In the evening I laved in the fountain my sunburnt eyes, which were sore and irritated from the constant strain necessarily concomitant on spooring; after which I sat for a long time silently contemplating the tranquil scene. As the sun went down, the number of the feathered tribe that visited the fountains was truly surprising: turtle-doves, and extremely small long-tailed pigeons, were most abundant. These kept collecting from every side,

uttering their gentle notes, till the trees and bushes around the glade were thickly covered with them. I also observed four distinct varieties of partridge; and guinea-fowls attended in flocks of from twenty to sixty. On the 4th, having few followers, I was occupied from early dawn until the sun was under in cleaning the skull and hewing out the tusks of my bull elephant; and on the following day I returned to camp with a party of Bakalahari bearing them upon their shoulders. On the 6th I took the field with about forty natives and held through the forest in a south-easterly direction. Falling in with two white rhinoceroses, one of which carried an unusually long horn, I was induced to give her chase; and by hard riding I soon overtook and finished her with four shots behind the shoulder.

In the afternoon I was engaged for many hours combating with a vicious elephant, which I finished with thirty-five bullets in the shoulder, in an impracticable jungle of wait-a-bit thorns. The conflict was greatly prolonged by "The Immense Brute," which capered continually, and constantly destroyed the correctness of my aim. While I was fighting with this elephant, my dogs were combating with a younger bull, which they hunted backwards and forwards in the same thicket with myself. This elephant took up a position beside the one which had fallen, and the dogs continued barking around him. My rifle being now extremely dirty, I experienced

considerable difficulty in ramming home the balls, notwithstanding the power of my rhinoceros-horn loading-rod. This being accomplished, I ran cautiously within twenty yards of this second elephant, and, resting my rifle on a branch, I aimed for his heart and pressed the trigger. Alas! it was for the last time. The barrel burst with a terrific explosion, sending the locks and half the stock flying right and left, and very nearly sending me to "the land of the leal." I, however, received no further damage than a slight burn on my left arm, and the loss for many days of the use of my left ear, a fragment of the barrel having whizzed close past it. At first I was so stunned that I knew not if I were wounded or not, and on recovering from the shock my person underwent a strict scrutiny. Before I discovered these elephants I was faint from thirst, and quite done up with the power of the sun, owing to which I considered that I did not attack the elephant so bravely as I might otherwise have done.

The loss of my trusty two-grooved rifle, in such a remote corner of the world, was irreparable, and cut me to the heart. It was my mainstay; and as I thought of the many services it had performed for me in the hour of need, I mourned over it as David mourned for Absalom. On the evening of the 7th I returned to Mangmaluky under a burning sun, which continued oppressive throughout the day. Having lost my two-

grooved rifle, I resolved to try what could be done with the double-barrelled Moore and Purdey rifles, carrying sixteen to the pound, and I accordingly set about casting hardened bullets to suit them. For this purpose I had brought in with me a quantity of solder, but I now had the mortification to discover that all that I had possessed of this important article had mysteriously vanished by some underhand transaction betwixt my followers and Sicomy. I was thus reduced to the extremity of melting the contents of my old military canteen to harden the bullets; and upon overhauling it, I ascertained that the tray of the snuffers, the spoons, candlesticks, teapots, and two drinking-cups, were admirably suited for this purpose, and I accordingly sentenced them to undergo the fiery ordeal of the ladle.

In the evening I had much pleasure to behold my old friend Mutchuisho walk into my camp, followed by a numerous party of the natives. He seemed glad to see me, and we at once arranged to make an expedition to the eastward on the following day. Accordingly, on the morning of the 9th I took the field with Johannus and Mutchuisho and about eighty men, and proceeded in a south-easterly direction. We continued our course till the sun went down without finding fresh spoor, when we halted for the night to leeward of a fountain, where we hoped that elephants would come to drink. The heat

throughout the day had been most oppressive, the dense level forest rendering it still more insupportable. On the morrow we cast loose the horses to graze long before the dawn of day. No elephants had visited the fountain, so after an early breakfast we saddled up, and again held on in an easterly direction through boundless forests, till I found myself in a country which I had not hitherto visited. Passing along beneath a rocky hillock we started a detachment of hideous hyænas, which sought shelter from the sun beneath the shadow of the rocks. We passed several large herds of lovely camelopards, and I also obtained two very deadly chances of rhinoceros, both fine old bulls; but knowing well from past experience that my policy was to keep my followers hungry, I refrained from firing a single shot.

In the afternoon we reached a small vley, where five first-rate bull elephants had drunk on the preceding evening. Here my followers all sat down and rested for a quarter of an hour, a wild duck swimming fearlessly beside us. We then took up the spoor, but, as it was late in the day, I had not the slightest expectation of success, and was so done up with the power of the sun that I felt it irksome to sit in the saddle. The spoor led east, right away from camp, but the elephants seemed to have proceeded slowly, having extended widely from one another, and rent and uprooted an amazing number of goodly trees. Presently the spoor took a turn to our

left, when I grieved to remark that we were following it down the wind ; thus we eventually started the elephants which were feeding in the forest at no great distance, but, owing to a check among the trackers, we were not aware of this until the elephants had gained a considerable start.

On finding that they were gone, Johannus and I went off on the spoor at a rapid pace, but I had not the slightest expectation of overtaking them ; for it was so late that, even if I had already commenced the attack, the chances were that before I could finish one the night would have set in. It is much easier to hold the spoor of a herd of elephants that have been alarmed than to follow those which have been undisturbed, since the former adopt a decided course and follow one another in a direct line. Thus we were enabled to hold the spoor at a gallop without a check until our horses began to evince distress ; and, despairing of success, I was just going to pull up, when I heard Johannus exclaim, " Sir, sir, dar stand illa," and, looking before me, I beheld five enormous old bull elephants walking slowly along. They seemed heated by the pace at which they had retreated, and were now refreshing themselves with large volumes of water, which nature enables them to discharge from their capacious stomachs, and shower back upon their bodies with their extraordinary trunks. I overtook these elephants in open ground, which enabled me at once to make a fine

selection. I had never before obtained so satisfactory a view of a herd of bulls: they really looked wondrous vast. It is a heart-stirring sight to behold one bull elephant; but when five gigantic old fellows are walking slowly along before you, and you feel that you can ride up and vanquish whichever one you fancy, it is so overpoweringly exciting that it almost takes a man's breath away; but it was now too late in the day to part with my breath for a single moment. Johannus whispered to me to wait a little, to allow the horses to recover their wind; but Wolf dashing in upon them, I was obliged to follow to obtain an accurate selection of the tusks. Spurring my horse, in another moment I was in the middle of them, closely followed by Johannus; and in a twinkling the finest bull had received the contents of the Moore and Purdey behind the shoulder. I was now joined by Wolf, who rendered me important service by considerably engrossing the attention of the elephant, running barking before him as he charged. I was in a precious hurry, as the sun was setting, and I kept loading and firing at duelling distance. On receiving the twenty-fourth shot he stood trembling violently for several seconds, and then fell heavily forward on his tusks, after which he rolled over and rested on his side. I reckoned this to be a fortunate conclusion after the hard and toilsome day I had spent under the power of a scorching sun. Mutchuisho and the natives soon made

their appearance, all in wondrous good humour at our success.

The nearest water to this elephant was in a vley situated several miles to the eastward; and when the natives had constructed a number of water-bags of the under skin of the elephant, a watering party was despatched with these and a number of calabashes which they always carried along with them. This party rejoined us at the hour of midnight, and reported that while they were filling their water-bags at one side of the vley a troop of bull elephants were drinking at the other. Accordingly, on the morrow I went in quest of these, accompanied by Mutchuisho and a small party, and on the second day I came up with them and bagged an old bull whose tusks were the stoutest I had ever seen.

On the morrow I cast loose the steeds at earliest dawn, and soon after we heard the hoarse cry of an elephant within half a mile of us. I permitted my horses to graze while the dew was on the grass, after which, along with the dogs, I sent them to water with a party of Bakalahari at a fountain reported three miles distant, and in the mean time I regaled myself with coffee and rhinoceros.

It is extraordinary how soon the mind accustoms itself to everything, good or bad. There I sat taking my breakfast, with a troop of princely elephants feeding

within a few minutes' ride of me, with as much indifference as if I were going woodcock-shooting. I certainly did not feel half so anxious about the matter as I usually did when taking my breakfast on a fine May morning, with a southerly wind, before starting to fish my native river. This indifference was probably owing to the reduced state of my system from improper diet and constant toil.

When the Bakalahari returned with the dogs and horses, they reported fresh spoor of bull elephants by the fountain; and at the same moment another party, whom Mutchuisho had despatched in the direction of the cry, returned to say that it was a herd of bulls which we had heard that morning. This was very pleasing intelligence, for I had fancied that the elephants must be a troop of cows, whose traces we had observed on the preceding evening. Everything being ready, we made for the elephants, and, as we approached them, an old bull rhinoceros was detected standing within forty yards, which, as if aware that I dared not fire on him, kept trotting along the path before me. We discovered the elephants quietly browsing on very unfavourable ground, the greater part of the forest consisting of the ever-recurring wait-a-bits. The troop was composed of three old bulls, two of which carried stumpy and broken tusks.

On the evening of the 20th, after bowling over another

elephant with a splendid pair of tusks, I returned to camp, where, to my utter horror, I found my favourite Colesberg dangerously ill. Guessing that it was the distemper, I had him up instantly and bled him freely, but to no purpose. Finding him worse on the morrow, I bled him again, but before midday he died in great pain, and shortly after life had departed a copious discharge of white foam issued from his nostrils, by which I knew that his illness was the African distemper,¹

I had also the mortification to observe that the "Immense Brute" was affected, evincing symptoms similar to

¹ This bitter scourge of the African sportsman prevails throughout every district of the interior during the greater part of the year. At no season is the hunter's stud exempt from its ravages; it is most prevalent however during the summer months, generally commencing with the early rains. There are various opinions among the horse-breeders of the colony regarding its prevention and cure; but notwithstanding all that has been done and said, the subject still remains wrapped in utter mystery. The distemper rarely visits districts adjacent to the sea, and is also unusual in mountain districts. In proportion as the traveller advances from the sea, so will he find the sickness prevalent. In all years it is not alike, and every fifth or seventh year it ravages the farms on the frontier districts, where a farmer often loses from fifty to a hundred horses in a single season. Bleeding is generally believed to act as a preventive. When a horse is attacked with it he almost invariably comes up to his master's waggon, or the door of his dwelling-place, as if soliciting assistance in his deep distress, and when led away to a distance, unless he be secured, the poor animal will continue to return to his master's dwelling. This was the case with my much-lamented Colesberg, of the free and fiery indomitable spirit.

those of Colesberg, on which I had him caught and bled him freely. About the hour of midday we got under way, when I trekked till sundown in a south-westerly course, steering for the mountains of Bamangwato. I formed my encampment beside a little fountain, whose name I never ascertained.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Turn my Waggon towards the Colony — A Troop of Elephants in Indian File — Splendid Sport amongst them — Two of them break their Tusks in falling — The Rainy Season commences — Erection of a Bothy — The gigantic Nwana-tree — Sicomy's Mountain Kraal — Four of his Subjects become my Servants — Corriebely — The Natives astonished by my finding a Mine of Lead — Elephant-shooting — Leave the land of Elephants — Boötlonamy — Terrific Thunderstorm.

HAVING so far succeeded in the object of my expedition, and both my waggons being now heavily laden with the tusks of elephants and a large collection of the spoils of the chase, with a number of other interesting curiosities, I at length resolved once more to turn my face towards the distant dwellings of my countrymen. On the 23rd of September, however, although harassed in my mind, and fearing to lose all my horses if I did not speedily forsake the country, I yielded to my inclination, and the persuasions of Mutchuisho, once more to take the field, and follow the spoor of two bull elephants, reported to have visited a distant fountain. Before starting I gave Johannes my phlegme, and a hasty lesson in the art of bleeding, with instructions to bleed copiously any of my stud evincing the slightest symptoms of distemper. We

held an easterly course, and at sundown on the second day I bagged a white rhinoceros and a fine old bull elephant, beside whose carcase I bivouacked as usual. On the forenoon of the 25th I saddled up and held for camp, accompanied by only one attendant.

It was a glorious day, with a cloudy sky, and the wind blew fresh off the Southern Ocean. Having ridden some miles in a northerly direction, we crossed the broad and gravelly bed of a periodical river, in which were abundance of holes excavated by the elephants, containing delicious water. Having passed the river, we entered an extensive grove of picturesque cameel-dorn trees, clad in young foliage of the most delicious green. On gaining a gentle eminence about a mile beyond this grove, I looked forth upon an extensive hollow, where I beheld for the first time for many days a fine old cock ostrich, which quickly observed us and dashed away to our left. I had ceased to devote my attention to the ostrich, and was straining my eyes in an opposite direction, when Kleinboy called out to me, "Dar loup de ould carle;" and turning my eyes to the retreating ostrich, I beheld two first-rate old bull elephants, charging along at their utmost speed within a hundred yards of it. They seemed at first to be in great alarm, but, quickly discovering what it was that had caused their confusion, they at once reduced their pace to a slow and stately walk. This was a fine look-out, the country appeared to be favourable for

an attack, and I was followed by Wolf and Bonteberg, both tried and serviceable dogs with elephants. Owing to the pace at which I had been riding, both dogs and horses were out of breath, so I resolved not to attack the elephants immediately, but to follow slowly, holding them in view.

The elephants were proceeding right up the wind, and the distance betwixt us was about five hundred yards. I advanced quietly towards them, and had proceeded about half way, when, casting my eyes to my right, I beheld a whole herd of tearing bull elephants standing thick together on a wooded eminence within three hundred yards of me. These elephants were almost to leeward. Now the correct thing to do was to slay the best in each troop, which I accomplished in the following manner :—I gave the large herd my wind, upon which they instantly tossed their trunks aloft, “a moment snuffed the tainted gale,” and, wheeling about, charged right down wind, crashing through the jungle in dire alarm. My object now was to endeavour to select the finest bull, and hunt him to a distance from the other troop, before I should commence to play upon his hide. Stirring my steed, I galloped forward. Right in my path stood two rhinoceroses of the white variety, and to these the dogs instantly gave chase. I followed in the wake of the retreating elephants, tracing their course by the red dust which they raised and left in clouds behind them.

Presently emerging into an open glade, I came full in sight of the mighty game ; it was a truly glorious sight ; there were nine or ten of them, which were, with one exception, full-grown, first-rate bulls, and all of them carried very long, heavy, and perfect tusks. Their first panic being over, they had reduced their pace to a free, majestic walk, and they followed one leader in a long line, exhibiting an appearance so grand and striking that any description, however brilliant, must fail to convey to the mind of the reader an adequate idea of the reality. Increasing my pace, I shot alongside, at the same time riding well out from the elephants, the better to obtain an inspection of their tusks. It was a difficult matter to decide which of them I should select, for every elephant seemed better than his neighbour ; but, on account of the extraordinary size and beauty of his tusks, I eventually pitched upon a patriarchal bull, which, as is usual with the heaviest, brought up the rear. I presently separated him from his comrades, and endeavoured to drive him in a northerly direction. There is a peculiar art in driving an elephant in the particular course which you may fancy, and, simple as it may seem, it nevertheless requires the hunter to have a tolerable idea of what he is about. It is widely different from driving in an eland, which also requires judicious riding : if you approach too near your elephant or shout to him, a furious charge will certainly ensue, whilst, on the other

hand, if you give him too wide a berth, the chances are that you will lose him in the jungle, which, notwithstanding his size, is a very simple matter, and, if once lost sight of, it is more than an even bet that the hunter will never again obtain a glimpse of him. The ground being favourable, Kleinboy called to me to commence firing, remarking very prudently that he was probably making for some jungle of wait-a-bits, where we might eventually lose him. I continued, however, to reserve my fire until I had hunted him to what I considered to be a safe distance from the two old fellows which we had first discovered.

At length closing with him, I dared him to charge, which he instantly did in fine style, and as he pulled up in his career I yelled to him a note of bold defiance, and, cantering alongside, I again defied him to the combat. It was thus the fight began, and, the ground being still favourable, I opened a sharp fire upon him, and in about a quarter of an hour twelve of my bullets were lodged in his forequarters. He now evinced strong symptoms of approaching dissolution, and stood catching up the dust with the point of his trunk and throwing it in clouds above and around him. At such a moment it is extremely dangerous to approach an elephant on foot, for I have remarked that, although nearly dead, he can muster strength to make a charge with great impetuosity. Being anxious to finish him, I dismounted

from my steed, and, availing myself of the cover of a gigantic nwana-tree, whose diameter was not less than ten feet, I ran up within twenty yards, and gave it him sharp right and left behind the shoulder. These two shots wound up the proceeding; on receiving them he backed stern foremost into the cover, and then walked slowly away. I had loaded my rifle, and was putting on the caps, when I heard him fall over heavily; but, alas! the sound was accompanied by a sharp crack, which, I too well knew, denoted the destruction of one of his lovely tusks; and, on running forward, I found him lying dead, with the tusk, which lay under, snapped through the middle.

I did not tarry long for an inspection of the elephant, but, mounting my horse, I at once set off to follow on the spoor of the two old fellows which the ostrich had alarmed. Fortunately I fell in with a party of natives, who were on their way to the waggons with the impedimenta, and, assisted by these, I had sanguine hopes of shortly overtaking the noble quarry. We had not gone far when two wild boars, with enormous tusks, stood within thirty yards of me, but this was no time to fire, and a little after a pair of white rhinoceroses stood directly in our path. Casting my eyes to the right, I beheld within a quarter of a mile of me a herd of eight or ten cow elephants, with calves, peacefully browsing on a sparsely wooded knoll. The spoor we followed led due south, and the

wind was as fair as it could blow. We passed between the twin-looking abrupt pyramidal hills, composed of huge disjointed blocks of granite, which lay piled above each other in grand confusion. To the summit of one of these I ascended with a native, but the forest in advance was so impenetrable that we could see nothing of the game we sought. Descending from the hillock we resumed the spoor, and were enabled to follow at a rapid pace; the native who led the spooring party being the best tracker in Bamangwato. I had presently very great satisfaction to perceive that the elephants had not been alarmed, their course being strewed with branches which they had chewed as they slowly fed along. The trackers now became extremely excited, and strained their eyes on every side in the momentary expectation of beholding the elephants. At length we emerged into an open glade, and, clearing a grove of thorny mimosas, we came full in sight of one of them. Cautiously advancing, and looking to my right, I next discovered his comrade, standing in a thicket of low wait-a-bits, within a hundred and fifty yards of me; they were both first-rate old bulls, with enormous tusks of great length. I dismounted, and warily approached the second elephant for a closer inspection of his tusks. As I drew near he slightly turned his head, and I then perceived that his farther one was damaged towards the point, while at the same instant his comrade, raising his head clear of the bush on which he

browsed, displayed to my delighted eyes a pair of the most beautiful and perfect tusks I had ever seen.

Regaining my horse, I advanced towards this elephant, and when within forty yards of him he walked slowly on before me in an open space, his huge ears gently flapping, and entirely concealing me from his view. Inclining to the left, I slightly increased my pace, and walked past him within sixty yards, upon which he observed me for the first time ; but probably mistaking "Sunday" for a hartebeest, he continued his course with his eye upon me, but showed no symptoms of alarm. The natives had requested me to endeavour, if possible, to hunt him towards the water, which lay in a northerly direction, and this I resolved to do. Having advanced a little, I gave him my wind, when he was instantly alarmed and backed into the bushes, holding his head high and right to me. Thus he stood motionless as a statue, under the impression probably that owing to his Lilliputian dimensions I had failed to observe him, and fancying that I would pass on without detecting him. I rode slowly on, and described a semicircle to obtain a shot at his shoulder, and, halting my horse, I fired from the saddle ; he got it in the shoulder-blade, and, as slowly and silently I continued my course, he still stood gazing at me in utter astonishment. Bill and Flam were now slipped by the natives, and in another moment they were barking around him. I shouted loudly to encourage the

dogs and perplex the elephant, who seemed puzzled to know what to think of us, and, shrilly trumpeting, charged headlong after the dogs. Retreating, he backed into the thicket, then charged once more, and made clean away, holding the course I wanted. When I tried to fire, "Sunday" was very fidgety, and destroyed the correctness of my aim. Approaching the elephant, I presently dismounted, and, running in, gave him two fine shots behind the shoulder; then the dogs, which were both indifferent ones, ran barking at him. The consequence was a terrific charge, the dogs at once making for their master, and bringing the elephant right upon me. I had no time to gain my saddle, but ran for my life. The dogs, fortunately, took after "Sunday," who, alarmed by the trumpeting, dashed frantically away; though in the heat of the affray I could not help laughing to remark horse, dogs, and elephant all charging along in a direct line.

The dogs, having missed their master, held away for Kleinboy, who had long disappeared I knew not whither. "Sunday" stood still; and commenced to graze, while the elephant, slowly passing within a few yards of him, assumed a position under a tree beside him. Kleinboy presently making his appearance, I called to him to ride in and bring me my steed, but he refused and asked me if I wished him to go headlong to destruction. "Sunday" having fed slowly away from the elephant, I

went up and he allowed me to recapture him. I now plainly saw that the elephant was dying, but I continued firing, to hasten his demise. Towards the end he took up a position in a dense thorny thicket, where for a long time he remained. Approaching within twelve paces, I fired my two last shots, aiming at his left side, close behind the shoulder. On receiving these he backed slowly through the thicket, and, clearing it, walked gently forward about twenty yards, when he suddenly came down with tremendous violence right on his broadside. To my intense mortification, the heavy fall was accompanied by a loud sharp crack, and on going up I found one of his matchless tusks broken short off by the lip. This was a glorious day's sport: I had bagged in one afternoon probably the two finest bull elephants in Bamangwato, and, had it not been for the destruction of their noble trophies, which were the two finest pair of tusks I had obtained that season, my triumph on the occasion had been great and unalloyed.

I was now languid and faint from excessive thirst, and the nearest water was still very remote. Being joined by the natives, we quickly proceeded to divest the side of the elephant of a large sheet of the outer skin, when of the under one we constructed a pair of water-bags, with which two of the natives set out, leading along with them the dogs and horses; nor did they rejoin us till after midnight, having lost their reckoning by the way. Their

comrades who were with me, conjecturing the cause of the delay, requested me to fire signal-shots at intervals throughout the night, which was the means of their eventually reaching their destination. At an early hour on the following day, leaving Kleinboy with the natives to look after the ivory, I set out with two men, to show them where the other elephant lay, and thence to continue my way to camp.

The weather had hitherto been favourable for the toilsome pursuit of elephant-hunting, little rain having fallen since I had first entered the country. At length, however, the rainy season was at hand, and we were constantly visited by the most appalling thunder-storms, accompanied by overwhelming torrents of rain, which filled the hitherto dry nullahs and gravelly water-courses with running streams, and converted the parched forest and arid plains into blossoming verdure and grassy meads. While hunting I was often overtaken by the rains, and on these occasions I still managed to keep myself tolerably comfortable, by compelling the natives to erect for me a bothy, or temporary hut. This duty they often proved reluctant to perform; but I invariably managed to gain my point, by explaining to them that, if my guns and powder were exposed to the rain, they would die, and then I could kill no more elephants for them.

When attended by a large party the erection of a

good substantial bothy was a simple and easy proceeding, and was accomplished in the following manner:—One party, armed with tomahawks, went in quest of long forked poles, which they cut in lengths of ten feet; a second party gathered green brushwood; and the third collected a large quantity of long dry grass, which they tore out of the ground by the roots. The poles were set up in a circular position, the forked ends meeting and resting against one another overhead, then the brushwood was tightly interlaced between the poles, leaving a small low aperture for the door, and the fabric was effectually thatched with the long grass, the conical summit being usually crowned either with the enormous ear or a portion of the hide of an elephant. Such was the bothy which the natives were wont to build for me when overtaken by storms, or when the sky looked threatening, during the remainder of that and all the subsequent seasons that I hunted among the Bechuana tribes. But it often happened, when I had lain down for the night with no other roof above me than the vaulted canopy of heaven, that my placid slumbers were rudely disturbed by rain falling like a water-spout on my face. Such events as these were extremely disagreeable, more especially when it came down so heavily as to preclude the possibility of maintaining our usual watch-fires. In weather like this the prowling tyrant of the forest is ever most active in his search for prey, and our ears were

occasionally greeted with the deep-toned voices of troops of lions, as, attracted by the smell of our beef, they prowled around our encampments.

I continued hunting to the eastward of Bamangwato until the 3rd of October, during which time I added four other noble elephants, besides rhinoceroses and other animals, to my already satisfactory list of game.¹

¹ It is about this latitude that the traveller will first meet with the gigantic and castle-like *nwana*, which is decidedly the most striking and wonderful tree among the thousands which adorn the South African forests. It is chiefly remarkable on account of its extraordinary size, actually resembling a castle or tower more than a forest-tree. Throughout the country of Bamangwato the average circumference of these trees was from thirty to forty feet; but on subsequently extending my researches in a north-easterly direction, throughout the more fertile forests which clothe the boundless tracts through which the fair Limpopo winds, I daily met with specimens of this extraordinary tree averaging from sixty to a hundred feet in circumference, and maintaining this thickness to a height from twenty to thirty feet, when they diverge into numerous goodly branches, whose general character is abrupt and horizontal, and which seem to terminate with a peculiar suddenness. The wood of this tree is soft and utterly unserviceable; the shape of the leaf is similar to that of the sycamore-tree, but its texture partakes more of the fig-leaf; its fruit is a nut, which in size and shape resembles the egg of the swan.

A remarkable fact, in connection with these trees, is the manner in which they are disposed throughout the forest. They are found standing singly, or in rows, invariably at considerable distances from one another, as if planted by the hand of man; and from their wondrous size and unusual height (for they always tower high above their surrounding compeers), they convey the idea of being strangers or interlopers on the ground they occupy.

The rains having fallen, the country was already adorned with a goodly coating of verdant grass, and my oxen, having done little else than feed and rest themselves for several months, were now full of spirit and in fine condition, and rattled along before my heavily laden waggons, over rugged hills and through the trackless mazes of the forest, at a rapid and willing pace, and on the evening of the 4th of October I once more formed my encampment at Lesausau, in the Bamangwato Mountains, in the neighbourhood of Sicomy's kraal.

Here I was quickly welcomed by Sicomy, who visited me in company with a numerous body of his tribe. He expressed himself much gratified at seeing me return in safety from the dangerous pursuit in which I had been employed, remarking that he was often anxious about me in my absence, for, if any casualty had befallen me, my king, he said, would be certain to seek restitution at his hands. His Majesty was pleased to compliment me on my extraordinary success and skill in hunting, and observed that the medicine of the white man must indeed be strong.

In the course of the evening he amused me with the quaintness of his questions, asking me if my father and mother were alive, how many brothers and sisters I had, if the flocks and herds of my king were extremely abundant, and if his subjects were more numerous than his own. On informing him that our chief was a

woman, he seemed much tickled by the disclosure ; and when I said that her subjects were as numerous as the locusts, he looked round on his warriors with an evident grin of disbelief, and then inquired of me if all my countrymen could vanquish the elephants as easily as I did. This was a puzzler : so I replied that I could not say ; but I knew that the hearts of all my nation were very strong, like the heart of the lion when his cubs are small. The whole assembly was greatly moved by this bright remark, and a general murmur of surprise and admiration extended through the dusky ranks as each man repeated to his neighbour the surpassing courage of my lion-hearted countrymen. Old Mutchuishi understood my gibberish better than any of the rest, and acted in the capacity of interpreter between me and the king. Our conversation was maintained partly by means of signs, my attainments in the Sichuana language being as yet but limited. Mutchuishi now intimated to me that two friends of Sicomy's, with their two attendants, wished to accompany me to the colony in the capacity of cattle-herds, who promised at the same time to make themselves generally useful in the way of collecting fire-wood and carrying venison home to the waggons. To this proposal I fortunately agreed, and the four aspirants came forward, and were duly introduced to me. The names of these four Bechuanas were Mollyee, Mollyeon, Kapain, and Kuruman : the two former belonged to the

aristocracy, and were old friends of mine, having often assisted me in the field. These men agreed to serve me faithfully as far as the sea and back again to the country of their chief, in consideration of which I promised on my part to reward them with a cow and a musket each.

Mollyee and Mollyeon were brothers; they were tall, active-looking savages, with large, bright, sparkling eyes and a pleasing cast of features. Kapain was a short, thickset, noisy individual, remarkable for his ugliness, and was the funniest fellow in all Bamangwato. Kuru-man was a good-natured boy of about sixteen years of age; his face was prepossessing, resembling that of a girl more than the sex to which he professed to belong. I entertained Sicomy with stewed meat and coffee, and he and his retinue remained that night in my encampment. Before retiring to rest he intimated to me, through Mutchuisho, that he wished to trade with me on the ensuing day, which I said I should be happy to do until the hour of midday, when I would positively inspan and leave Lesausau. Accordingly, at an early hour on the morrow sundry fine tusks and some good specimens of native arms and costume made their appearance, which I obtained in barter for beads, ammunition, and other articles. On inquiring of the king what had become of Isaac, he said that he had long since returned to Kuruman in company with a son of "old Seretse," a Bechuana of

distinction residing in the vicinity of Kuruman. This individual, whose name, being translated, signifies "*mud*," is remarkable for his bitterness against the advancement of the Christian religion and for the number of his progeny. Bidding adieu to Sicomy at midday on the 5th, I continued my march for Corriebely, which I reached about noon on the following day. I was accompanied, as usual, by a number of the natives, in the hope of obtaining a supply of flesh, elephants being reported to have revisited Massouey. Heavy rains had fallen throughout this district, and the country now presented an entirely new appearance, rank young grass having everywhere sprung up, and the plains and forests displaying a profusion of the richest verdure. It was here that I had concealed a large quantity of lead, in a hole beneath the ashes of my fire, before recrossing the mountains of Bamangwato. Proceeding to the spot, I had the satisfaction to observe that the ground appeared to have been undisturbed; and, returning to the waggons, I commenced to unlash from the side of one of these a shovel. The natives, who always watched my movements with great attention, at once observed me, and a large party followed me to my former fireplace. Here, to their surprise, I began to excavate; and on beholding the lead they seemed utterly astounded, and I could read very plainly in their faces that, had they known it was there, they would have saved my oxen the trouble of transporting it across the sandy

deserts betwixt me and Bakatla. On reaching Massouey, and examining the fountain, I sought in vain for the tracks of elephants; the natives, nevertheless, declared that one or two herds of these were still to be met with in the district, which I inclined to credit; and this report turned out to be correct, for the succeeding day I followed and succeeded in bagging a whole herd of eight bull and cow elephants, after a most exciting chase.

I continued hunting at Massouey till the 12th, when, bidding a long farewell to the land of elephants, I spanned, and marched upon Lepeby, which I reached at an early hour on the following day, having travelled several hours during the night, availing myself of the bright moonlight. When last I visited this fine fountain the game drank at it in numerous herds, but now not an animal of any kind came near it, with the exception of a few rhinoceroses. This I always found to be the case at the fountains during the summer months, when the game are very independent of water, owing to the more abundant moisture contained in the young grass. In the forenoon I went birdnesting among the reeds and rushes which grew around the fountain. Hundreds of birds resembling the redpole were busy building their grassy nests, which they ingeniously suspended between the tops of the reeds. In the rushes I found two nests of the water-hen, containing eggs, which, along with the nests, exactly corresponded with those in Scotland. Two beauti-

fully-painted wild geese, an egret, or white heron, and about twenty teal, ornamented the fountain, and were so tame that they permitted me to approach within a few yards of them.

At an early hour on the 16th I trekked for Boötlo-namy, which I reached at sundown on the same evening, and drew up the waggons under an impenetrable grove of picturesque mimosas, which were then gaily decked with a profusion of highly scented yellow blossoms, brightly contrasting with their summer vestment of delicious green. Here I continued hunting for several days, and enjoyed excellent sport, daily securing several fine specimens of the different varieties of game frequenting the district. On one occasion while hunting I started a secretary from off her nest, which was built on the top of a very dense green tree, with thorns on the fish-hook principle.* With much difficulty I cut my way to the large thorny branch on which the nest was built, and, to proceed farther being impossible, from the denseness of the thorns, I cut through this branch with my knife, and by dragging it down I got hold of the eggs, which were the size and shape of a turkey's, and the colour of a buzzard's egg.

On the forenoon of the 19th we were visited by a most terrific storm. The thunder was the most appalling I had ever heard, resembling the simultaneous discharge of a thousand pieces of artillery: it burst close over my head with a report so sudden and tremendous, that I involun-

tarily trembled, and the sweat ran down my brow. At other times the thunder rumbled on every side, and rolled away with a long-protracted sound, which had not died before fresh explosions burst above and around me. The lightning was so vivid that it pained my eyes; it seemed so near, that I fancied every moment it must strike the waggons, which would certainly have proved extremely inconvenient, as I had 300 lbs. of gunpowder stowed in one of them beneath my bed. About sundown the storm had passed away, having exquisitely purified the atmosphere, while the grateful earth and fragrant forest emitted a perfume of overpowering sweetness. I then sauntered out with my rifle towards where the oxen were grazing, and, falling in with a herd of brindled gnoos, I shot a couple of shaggy old fellows, firing right and left. The storm set in again about ten P.M. with thunder and lightning, which continued throughout the greater part of the night.

CHAPTER XIX.

All my Colonial Servants desert me — Pursue them in vain — Both Waggon get disabled — Melancholy Anticipations — Cut a Path through the Forest — A sandy Desert — Cattle dying for want of Water — Troubles surmounted — Pallahs and Koodoos — A Lion and Leopard visit the Camp at Midnight — Another Horse dies of Distemper — We reach Booby — One of the Axletrees breaks — The Bakatlas assist me — The Baggage-waggon upset in a River — The Distemper kills more Horses — Lions roaring — Arrive at Dr. Livingstone's — March upon Chouaney — The Ngotwani — A Herd of Buffaloes among the Reeds.

I HAD now arrived at a period of considerable importance in my lonely expedition, an event having occurred which caused me a world of trouble and anxiety, yet was nevertheless finally beneficial in its results, as it taught me what difficulties a man may surmount when he is pressed by adversity, and it was also the means of my becoming an accomplished waggon-driver. I allude to my being abandoned by all my colonial servants, with the exception of Ruyter, the little Bushman. I attributed this unmanly and dastardly proceeding mainly to their despair of succeeding in bringing the waggons safely across the sandy deserts intervening betwixt me and the distant missionary

station of Bakatla, on account of the broken state of one of the axletrees of my travelling waggon, Kleinboy in one of his drunken fits having driven it against a tree with such violence that one of the wooden arms of the fore axletree was cracked right across, so that little now held the wheel excepting the linchpin and the iron skein. I remarked on the 22nd that there was something unusual on the minds of my colonial followers, for none of them could look me in the face ; and in the evening I spoke harshly to them concerning some ground coffee which I had missed from my canteen.

On the 23rd of October I was lying asleep in my waggon, a little before the day dawned, when Ruyter awoke me, to report that my four Hottentots had decamped during the night. He said that each of them had taken with him a large bundle of biltongue or sundried meat, and that they had tried hard to prevail on him to accompany them. This was a rather startling announcement, for I had barely enough of hands to perform the work when they were with me, and the four savages from Bamangwato, like myself, were quite unaccustomed to the laborious and intricate art of waggon leading and driving, and the inspanning and outspanning of oxen. Imagining that the Hottentots would not persevere in so rash and unwarranted a measure, and that they would assuredly change their minds and retrace their steps to their master when they reflected on the step they had

taken, I did not endeavour to overtake them, but employed the morning in stowing the waggons, lashing down pots, spades, axes, &c., in their proper places, and overhauling the gear preparatory to marching.

Having breakfasted, I and the little Bushman, assisted by the savages, lassoed, sorted, and yoked twenty-four oxen, placing twelve before each waggon, when we cracked our whips and started from Boötlonamy. Mollyee and Mollyeon led the teams, and Kapain and Kuruman followed behind the waggons, driving the horses and loose oxen. In former days I had acquired considerable experience in driving tandem and four-in-hand; but I had now undertaken a pursuit of a widely different character. I soon, however, became quite "au fait" in the mysteries connected with the driving of oxen, and learnt to inspan and drive my own waggons with nearly the same expedition as before the desertion of the Hottentots.

The vley of Boötlonamy being firm and hard, we rattled along it at our wonted pace; but in the evening, as we cleared the vley, and entered on the sandy tracts beyond, the oxen, having discovered that their new drivers could not wield the whips with the rapidity and execution of the old, declined to move along the heavy sand beyond the pace they fancied, often halting of their own accord. Eventually, in ascending a sandy ridge, the Bushman's waggon stuck fast in the deep sand, and in trying to drag it out the oxen broke the "dissel-

boom," or pole. Finding that the labours we had undertaken were greater than I had calculated upon, I resolved to ride on the morrow in pursuit of the runaways; and accordingly at daybreak on the following day, leaving the waggons and their valuable contents at the mercy of the savages, I started with the Bushman and a spare horse to endeavour to overtake them. There was no water where the waggons stood, so I instructed Mollyeon to proceed with the cattle in quest of that essential requisite. I held along my old waggon-track, where we traced the footsteps of the Hottentots; and having ridden some miles, we reached the spot where they had slept, and where the ashes of their fire still were smouldering. I followed up their spoor till midday, when I accidentally took up the spoor of a party of Bakalahari, which we followed in a westerly direction, imagining that the Hottentots were with them. This spoor we eventually lost in stony ground, and then we rode back to where we had lost the right spoor, which after some search we found, and once more held on. Our steeds were now fatigued, for we had ridden sharp, and they were faint with thirst, as we were also; but we sought in vain for water in the vleys which had contained it when we last passed through the country. A little before the sun went down we reached three small pools of water left by the recent rains, and here the Hottentots had drunk and were at that moment hiding in a bush within a hundred

yards of me, as I discovered on the ensuing day. I however failed to observe them; and fancying that they had held on to a larger vley, where I had encamped on my way to Bamangwato, we proceeded for that place, and, night setting in, we at length lost our way in the intricacies of the forest.

Faint, hungry, and thirsty, we now desisted from our fruitless search, and on looking for my matches I found to my intense mortification that I had lost them; and being on this occasion minus my shooting-belt and rifle, we spent the night without a fire, thereby incurring great danger of losing the horses and ourselves by lions. Scarcely had we off-saddled when two huge rhinoceroses came up and stood within twenty yards of us, and would not for a long time be persuaded to depart. Some time after I observed a dark-looking object prowling around us, and evidently anxious to cultivate the acquaintance either of ourselves or the horses. It was a hyæna. Rising from my comfortless couch, I pelted him with stones, when he took the hint and made off. The horses were completely done up, and when knee-haltered would not feed. One of them on being off-saddled lay stretched upon the ground, and after a while, on endeavouring to walk, repeatedly rolled over on his side.

On the 25th I cast loose the horses as soon as it was clear, and ascended to the summit of a pyramidal little hill beside which we had slept, to ascertain from thence

whither I had wandered ; but the view from this hill did not help to elucidate matters, endless forests stretching away on every side without a mark to assist my memory. I now resolved to seek no longer for my ruffianly Hottentots, but to retrace my spoor to the water I had discovered on the preceding evening, and halt there for a day until the horses should sufficiently recover their strength to carry us back to the waggons. By adhering to the horses' tracks, I reached the water at an early hour, and here I discovered the fresh tracks of the Hottentots on the top of our horses' spoor of the preceding evening. I had, however, resolved not to ride another yard after them ; I accordingly off-saddled, and remained there for the remainder of the day. In the vicinity of the water we discovered the spot where the Hottentots had slept during the night. Although possessed of flint and steel, they had not kindled a fire, having nevertheless collected fuel for that purpose previous to our arrival on the preceding evening. This, as I afterwards learnt from themselves, was to prevent our discovering their position, in case we had returned that evening. I spent most of the day in endeavouring to make fire, which I failed to accomplish for want of tinder. This was extremely annoying, for I had brought along with me both tea and coffee, as also a kettle, and a haunch of springbok.

On the morning of the 26th we cast loose our horses, and proceeded to consume raw meat and water. While

thus breakfasting, a pair of superb roan antelopes approached the water, advancing within easy range before they noticed us. We saddled up and rode for the waggons, which we reached in the afternoon, having off-saddled for an hour by the way. I found the waggons as I had left them, as also the savages, who had fortunately discovered a small vley of rain-water about two miles to the southward of their position, where they had daily refreshed themselves and the cattle. My situation was by no means an enviable one, and my mind was burdened with anxiety. One of the waggons was fast in deep sand, with the dissel-boom broken, and the fore-axle of the other was cracked, so that at any moment it was likely to give way; and if this should happen on the line of march while crossing the desert and far from water, I should have had no alternative but to abandon the waggon to its fate. Moreover, owing to the indolent disposition of the Hottentots, everything connected with the gear was broken and out of order, while the hatchets appeared to have been used in chopping gun-flints, and all their handles were in similar condition.

I arose at dawn on the morning of the 27th, and, having cast loose the horses and oxen, I rummaged out my tools, and in two hours I got out the broken dissel-boom, and put in a new one, which I formed from the stem of a tough mimosa. This being accomplished, I yoked twelve oxen to the waggon which was sticking in the

sand, but tried in vain to make them drag it out, for the cunning animals knew that it was fast, and would not exert themselves to attempt to extricate it. After inconceivable trouble and repeatedly shifting the positions of the various oxen in the span, I at length made a fortunate arrangement of the oxen. The brutes for once pulled all together, and once more the waggon was in motion. I then inspanned the other team, and we reached the water without further trouble. As we neared the water I detected a giraffe browsing within a quarter of a mile ; this was well, for we required flesh. Commanding silence, I hastily outspanned, and, having saddled the Old Grey, I rode with Ruyter to where we last had seen the "Tootla." Having proceeded a short distance through the forest, I again discovered him within a hundred yards of me. He proved to be a young bull, and led me a severe chase over very heavy ground. Towards the end I thought he was going to beat me, and I was about to pull up, when suddenly he lowered his tail, by which I knew that his race was run. Urging my horse, I was soon alongside of him, and with three shots I ended his career. Having obtained for the present both flesh and water, my next lookout was to consider how I was to cross the sandy desert which lay betwixt me and the kraal of Booby. It was very evident that I could not return by the route I had previously held, having already ascertained that that country to ox-waggons was now impassable, all the waters being dry.

On explaining this to my Bamangwato followers, Mollyeon stated that he had once traversed that country in a dry season many years before, and that he and his comrades had obtained water in some deep pits, which had been excavated by Bakalahari in a rocky part of the desert, considerably to the eastward of my former route. He said we should require the greater part of two days to reach this water, our route thither lying across a soft sandy soil, varied in many places by almost impenetrable forest; he moreover seemed a little doubtful as to whether he should be able to discover the place, and, when we did, whether the pits might not prove dry. This was certainly a bright look-out, more especially as the next water (which he represented as a perpetual fountain) was two days beyond the uncertain pits.

On the 28th I was occupied about the waggon all the day, putting sundry things to rights. I had thoughts of trekking on the following day, and could not divest myself of the most dismal forebodings, for I felt certain that the heavier waggon would again stick fast, or that the cracked axletree would come in contact with some tree, and leave me in the desert a hopeless wreck, remote from water or any assistance. I had certainly good reason to be uneasy. On the 29th I waited till the sun was up, that the cattle might drink plentifully, when I immediately inspanned, and commenced my anxious journey. For the first ten or twelve miles we proceeded

along a hollow, where the soil was in general tolerably firm ; but on leaving this hollow we entered upon a most impracticable country, the waggons sinking about four inches in the soft sand. Though I held on I had not the slightest hope of getting through it, for every hundred yards required the utmost exertion both of ourselves and oxen ; yet I had the best of two days more of it to expect before I could reach the promised water. To increase our difficulties our progress was presently opposed by an interminable forest, where the trees stood so close together as often to bar the possibility of the waggons passing betwixt them.

On these occasions it became imperative upon me to turn pioneer, and in the course of the day I felled with the axe not less than fifty trees. In this manner I held on till the sun went down, when I halted in dense forest and cast loose the oxen for an hour ; after which, with infinite trouble, I lassoed the two teams and made them fast on the trek-tow, in their proper places, ready to inspan at dawn of day. I had also nine horses to catch and make fast, and none to assist me but the little Bushman ; for the savages were so lazy, awkward, and disobliging, that one Hottentot would have assisted me more than the whole pack of them.

On the 30th I inspanned before it was light, and again held on, as on the preceding day, through heavy sand and interminable forest, where it was necessary to keep the axes

in constant operation. In the afternoon we reached the promised watering-place, but on springing from the waggon, and running anxiously forward for an inspection of the pits, I had the mortification to find that all they contained was a little mud, in which sundry heterogeneous insects were sprawling. The Bechuanas, however, signified to me that, by clearing out the pits and digging a little, water would make its appearance. Accordingly, having outspanned the jaded oxen, I unlashed the spades, which were vigorously plied, when the water began very reluctantly to trickle in from every side. We thus cleared out the three most likely pits, and in two hours I obtained a very moderate supply of water for each of the oxen, which I gave them individually out of my large flesh-pot. My poor horses did not get a drop ; and we now proceeded to inspan, and resume our march beneath a burning sun of unusual intensity. The sand became, if possible, worse than ever, and the waggons repeatedly stuck fast. We held through a jangle of the most virulent wait-a-bit thorns, which reduced my waggon-sails to ribbons ; and when the sun went down I halted for the night, and cast loose my wretched oxen for an hour.

On the 31st my vans were again in motion before daylight ; and about four P.M., to my infinite delight and great relief, I got clear of the desert, and reached a strong perennial fountain situated in a finely-wooded valley on the northern borders of the mountain country, extending

to the southward, with little intermission, as far as the chain of the Kurrichane range. Towards the end of the march it was necessary to descend into a rugged valley, and cross a very awkward watercourse, in which the baggage-waggon was within a hair-breadth of being cap-sized. Ascending from this valley, we crossed a precipitous ridge, where large disjointed masses of rock threatened the momentary destruction of the waggons. As I was yoking one of the oxen, which had broken his yoke-skey and got out of his place, I received from a vicious ox in front a severe kick on the cap of the knee, which gave me intense pain and laid me prostrate on the ground. I however managed to drive the waggon to its destination, where, after lying for a few minutes, the pain increased so much that I lay panting on my bed. Just as I had out-spanned, and before my knee had stiffened, a herd of zebras approached the fountain to drink. This was a godsend at such a moment, our flesh being at an end and the dogs starving. In torture as I was, I managed to make a limping stalk towards them, when I obtained a fine double-shot and brought down a brace of fine old mares.

The following day was the 1st of November ; my knee was much better, and in the afternoon I went out with Ruyter and shot two koodoos and a pallah. I shot one of the koodoos from the saddle, as he bounded past me at a hundred yards. At night, as I lay down, I heard a lion roar in the vicinity of camp, but soon I was asleep. In

a few hours I was awoke by an unusual disturbance in the camp, and, raising my head, I saw the Bechuanas standing close together round the fire with their faces outwards, while they shrieked and talked with unusual volubility. I guessed at once that a lion caused the rumpus; and I was right. The dogs were barking loud and angrily, and kept rushing back occasionally to the fire, as if pursued by some animal. The night was pitch dark, so that nothing could be seen; but Mollyeon told me that a lion and a leopard were prowling round us, endeavouring to obtain the venison of the zebras, which hung in festoons in the trees beside us; and next moment I heard the voices of both, for the lion roared and the leopard shrieked wildly as they sprang after the dogs. At length their boldness increased; the lion chased the dogs with angry growls within twenty yards of where we stood, and the leopard actually sprang into the centre of my larder beside the fire, and was making off with a large fragment of ribs, when the dogs went gallantly at him. He turned upon them, and so terribly lacerated two that they soon after died from their wounds. We now snatched up large flaming brands from the fire, and, meeting the lion as he advanced, we sent them flying in his face, when I fancy he made off. I feared to use my rifle lest I should shoot the dogs. The horses and oxen, although much alarmed, did not endeavour to break loose, being still very much fatigued from the hardships they had undergone.

On the morning of the 2nd I shot a koodoo, which antelope seemed here to be tolerably abundant; and about midday, as I sat writing beneath the waggon, I observed a troop of zebras approaching the fountain, followed by a string of koodoos, three of which carried unusually fine horns. While I sat looking at them through my spyglass, I directed Ruyter to bring up the horses, when we saddled the "Grey" and the "Chestnut Pony," and rode slowly towards them, till they started, when we gave them chase. They took right up the face of a stony ridge, and as they disappeared over its summit the Bushman was riding within a spear's length of the finest buck. Before, however, I could gain the ridge, the "Old Grey" refused to proceed farther, when, dismounting, I resumed the chase on foot, but failed to fall in with my after-rider, who eventually brought the koodoo to a stand. Retracing my steps, I directed my attention to my poor "Old Grey," which was evidently attacked with the African distemper. With considerable difficulty I brought him to the camp, where I instantly bled him, but to no purpose, and in another hour the "gallant grey" lay down and "stretched his stiff limbs to rise no more." At night the lion feasted on him, and when he was full the leopard and hyænas finished him.

On the morning of the 3rd I left this fountain and held for Booby, which I reached at midday on the 5th. On

my way thither we one evening fell in with a large herd of elands, out of which I captured a first-rate bull. I was kindly welcomed by Caachy, now the chief of Booby, the former chief having been blown up in my absence as already mentioned. Caachy informed me that my runaway Hottentots had reached his kraal, and were very much exhausted by their march. He had assisted them with corn, and passed them on to Bakatla. They informed this chief that I had dismissed them from my service, having engaged other servants at Bamangwato. I remained at Booby till midday on the 7th, and obtained several very fine karosses and other native curiosities in barter from the tribe. The king supplied me liberally with boyalwa, or native beer, which I thought most excellent, but found that it possessed a soporific tendency, inducing me on one occasion to lie down and sleep for half the day while the king and his nobility were waiting to trade with me. A large body of the natives accompanied me from Booby, some of them leading pack-oxen which were sent by Caachy to convey the venison of sundry rhinoceroses which I engaged to shoot for him. These men led me towards Bakatla by a different route from that which I had formerly adopted.

Early on the 13th, while taking coffee, I was met by a party from Bakatla who had been kindly despatched by Dr. Livingstone, the resident missionary, on hearing of my abandonment by my colonial servants. The party

consisted of a Bechuana, named Mabal, belonging to Kuruman (who assisted Dr. Livingstone in teaching the children of the Bakatlas), and three of the Bakatla tribe. These men reached me just at the proper moment ; for, having inspanned, before we had proceeded three hundred yards the damaged axletree broke short across, and the wheel rolling away the waggon came down on its side. This was a catastrophe I had for some time anticipated, and I was only thankful that it had been deferred so long. We outspanned, and, having unloaded the waggon, we put a support under it, and took out the fore-stell, and I then set about making a false axletree of tough thorn-wood. The vertical sun was extremely powerful, and both my ankles gave me severe and never-ceasing pain from wounds inflicted by the cruel wait-a-bits and inflammation induced by the unvarying animal diet on which I had so long subsisted. In the afternoon of the following day I got the false axletree fixed in its proper position, and having loaded up the waggon we were once more ready for a start.

On the 15th we inspanned, and, having passed through the bold mountain gorge of Sesetabie, we encamped on the margin of a periodical river whose precipitous banks and broad channel of deep soft sand caused me considerable apprehensions of difficulties for the morrow.

On the 16th I unlashed my spades and pickaxe, and worked hard for several hours cutting down the precipi-

tous banks of the river and constructing a road for the waggons to pass ; after which we inspanned and took the stream. I drove my waggon safely through ; but, alas ! not so with the baggage-waggon. Twice it stuck fast in the treacherous sand while crossing the river's bed, but the sturdy oxen pulled it out, and had dragged it more than half-way up the almost perpendicular bank, when the native who led the long team, unmindful that a waggon was behind them, suddenly turned the leading oxen short towards the river's bank, thus rendering it impossible for the driver to steer his after-oxen. The waggon was dragged off the fine road which I had made for it, and after quivering for a moment as if loth to meet its fate, it fell heavily over and rolled down the bank with a most terrific crash, smashing the fine capped tent, and sending the ivory and all my highly-valued trophies flying into the bed of the river in a mass of the most dire confusion.

This was enough to vex any man, but I had now become so seasoned to adversity that I only laughed at the capsize as though the accident had happened to a foe ; and having unyoked the oxen, we commenced carrying the heavy ivory and other articles up the bank to the level ground beyond ; after which we righted the waggon, and a team of oxen dragged it up the bank. I then set to work to repair the tent with green boughs, and before sunset we had again replaced the greater part of the cargo. As the sun went down "The Cow" died from

the distemper which had carried off my other two horses. The night set in with thunder, lightning, and rain; jackals and hyænas prowled around us, and soon found the remains of my lamented charger, on which they feasted till the dawn of day.

The 17th ushered in a lovely morning, and the sky was beautifully overcast with clouds. When I got things dry I finished stowing the waggon, and we then trekked, holding on till the evening, when the axle-tree which I had made burst, and the linchpin giving way the wheel rolled off, leaving me once more a wreck. While securing my few remaining horses, I remarked that a handsome little bay horse, named "Hutton," evinced symptoms of the distemper, but I did not bleed him, as it seemed to be of no avail. Heavy rain continued falling throughout the night, and next morning the ground where we had outspanned was a mass of deep mud. At an early hour all hands were busy in again unloading the broken waggon, and before night I had finished another axletree and fixed it in its place. The day throughout was dark and gloomy—heavy clouds hung low on the mountain of the eagles, reminding me of the mist I was wont to see in the distant country of the Gael, and our ears were repeatedly saluted with the subdued voices of a troop of lions which were moaning in concert around its base. In the evening the horse called "Hutton" died, and scarcely had night set in when his doleful coronach

was wildly re-echoed by the shrill voices of a score of jackals, which the lions hearing soon came to their assistance, and presently we heard them feasting on his remains.

On the morning of the 19th we resumed our march, and at a late hour on the evening of the 20th we reached the missionary station at Bakatla, where I was kindly received by Dr. Livingstone and his amiable lady. They had been anxious concerning my fate, and entertained great apprehensions for my safety. Mrs. Livingstone had seen my Hottentots as they passed through Bakatla, where they remained only one day; and that lady represented them as bearing the appearance of men who had been guilty of crime. She had endeavoured, but without success, to prevail upon them to rejoin their master and return to their duty. Dr. Livingstone at the time was absent on a visit to Sichely, superintending the erection of a dwelling-house and place of public worship at that chief's kraal, named "Chouaney," whither he intended shortly to remove, there being another missionary, named Mr. Edwards, already stationed at Bakatla, who was then absent on a visit to the colony. Dr. Livingstone informed me that at present there was war between the Baquaines, of whom Sichely is chief, and the Bakatlas, and that the latter were in daily expectation of an attack.

The 23rd was Sunday, when Dr. Livingstone showed me, on comparing notes, that I had lost a day during my

sojourn in the far interior. I attended Divine service, and had considerable difficulty to maintain my gravity as sundry members of the congregation entered the church clad in the most unique apparel. Some of these wore extraordinary old hats ornamented with fragments of women's clothes and ostrich-feathers. These fine hats they were very reluctant to take off, and one man sat with his beaver on immediately before the minister until the doorkeeper went up to him and ordered him to remove it. At dinner we had a variety of excellent vegetables, the garden producing almost every sort in great perfection; the potatoes in particular were very fine. To-day another of my stud, named Yarborough (so called in honour of a gallant major of the 91st from whom I purchased him), died of the distemper, and was immediately consumed by the starving curs of the Bakatlas. Being anxious to visit Sichely and his tribe, Dr. Livingstone and I resolved to leave Bakatla and march upon Chouaney with one of my waggons on the ensuing day; the Doctor's object being to establish peace between the two tribes, and mine to enrich myself with ivory and karosses and other objects of interest.

On the morning of the 24th I off-loaded the baggage waggon, and stowed its contents in Dr. Livingstone's premises, after which the Doctor and I started for Chouaney, which bore a little to the east of north. Our road lay through the most perfect country. On

clearing the romantic valley of Bakatla we descended into another beautiful valley, through which meandered the crystal waters of the Ngotwani, an interesting stream, which, flowing in a north-easterly direction, falls into the Limpopo about sixty miles below its junction with the Mariqua. The Ngotwani contains several varieties of fish, which are of good flavour, and afford the angler steady average sport both with bait and fly. After following some distance along the finely-wooded banks of the Ngotwani, and having twice crossed its stream, we entered upon an extensive open tract of country adorned with a carpet of the most luxuriant herbage. This interesting plain was beautifully wooded towards the mountain ranges which bound it on every side, and the Ngotwani twined in a serpentine course along the middle of it, forming in one part an extensive vley or marsh about four miles long and a quarter of a mile in breadth. This vley was now beautified with a dense crop of waving green reeds, averaging about fourteen feet in height, and forming a favourite resort of buffaloes and their invariable attendants the lions. Dr. Livingstone told me that a party of Baquaines were to leave Chouaney on the ensuing day to visit this vley, for the purpose of cutting a supply of the long rank reeds with which to thatch his new church and dwelling-house ; and he said that he should wish me, if opportunity presented itself, to shoot some large game on which these men might feed.

We were marching quietly along and were nearly opposite the centre of the reeds, when, on emerging from a grove of thorny mokala trees, casting our eyes to the right, we suddenly beheld a numerous herd of buffaloes grazing on the open plain betwixt us and the vley. Their dark imposing squadrons extended over a great space of ground, and we reckoned that there might have been between six and eight hundred of them. I immediately saddled "Sunday," and rode towards them. As I drew near they stood gazing at me for a minute, and then, panic-stricken, the whole herd started off together, making for the nearest wood. Pressing my horse, I was soon ahead of them, and by shouting I turned them right about, when they thundered along in a compressed mass, and held for the reeds. Their amazing numbers greatly impeded their progress, and I had no difficulty in keeping alongside of them. I kept on their right flank to enable me more conveniently to fire, and on one occasion, on my riding very near the foremost of the herd, a large division of those behind me suddenly extended to the right and increased their pace, and, on looking over my shoulder, I found myself almost surrounded by their helmeted squadrons. As I galloped along I endeavoured to select the finest head, but among so many it was no easy matter to make a choice, and as soon as I selected one he disappeared among the ranks of his companions. At length,

riding at the gallop, I let fly right and left into the herd, and next moment they had gained the margin of the lofty reeds. Here the whole herd suddenly halted and faced about with the regularity and precision of a regiment of cavalry, when, having overhauled me for half a minute, they charged headlong into the soft muddy vley, and in another moment they were hidden from my view. I marked the reeds bowing before them far on my right and left as they splashed and struggled through the marshy vley, and presently they gained the other side, when, emerging from the reeds, they held across the open plain, steering for their strongholds in the woods beyond. As the clouds of dust behind me cleared away, I looked back and beheld a fine old cow stagger for a moment and then fall dead, and near her stood a wounded calf, whose mother had remained beside it, being loth to leave her offspring.

I now returned to Dr. Livingstone, when we brought up the waggon for the fallen buffaloes, and halted for the night. Just as we had outspanned, a blue wildebeest, having observed the oxen, and taking them for buffaloes, fearlessly approached the waggon, when, advancing under cover of one of the oxen, I bowled him over with my rifle. Early on the following morning the reed-cutters from Chouaney hove in sight, and were not a little gratified to find so bountiful a supply of their favourite "niama," or

flesh, awaiting their arrival. The afternoon was cold and rainy, and at a late hour we outspanned at Chouaney, where we were immediately welcomed by a messenger from Sichely, who expressed himself highly gratified at our arrival and promised to come and breakfast with me next morning.

CHAPTER XX.

Arrive at Sichely's Kraal — Description of that Chief — His Wives — The Rainmakers — My Gun Medicine — Bakatla — A Kraal struck by Lightning — Reach Mr. Moffat's Station at Kuruman — Daring Robberies of the Bushmen — Campbellsdorp — Discover my runaway Hottentots — We cross the Vaal — The Inmates of a Farm terrified by my wild Appearance — Colesberg and Grahamstown — English Hounds in Africa.

At an early hour on the 26th of November Sichely presented himself with a large retinue. The appearance of this chief was prepossessing, and his manner was civil and engaging; his stature was about five feet ten inches, and in his person he inclined to corpulency. His dress consisted of a handsome leopard-skin kaross, and on his arms and legs, which were stout and well turned, he wore a profusion of brass and copper ornaments manufactured by tribes residing a long way to the eastward. In the forenoon I accompanied Sichely to his kraal situated in the centre of the town, and alongside of it stood respectively the kraals of his wives, which were five in number. These kraals were neatly built, and were of a circular form, the walls and floors being smoothly plastered with a composition of clay and cow-dung, and secured from the weather by a firm and well-constructed thatch of rank dry grass.

Each kraal was surrounded by an area enclosed with a strong impenetrable fence six feet in height. The town was built on a gentle slope on the northern side of a broad extensive strath, throughout the whole extent of which lay wide fields and gardens enclosed with hedges of the wait-a-bits.

A short time previous to my arrival, a rumour having reached Sichely that he was likely to be attacked by the emigrant Boers, he suddenly resolved to secure his city with a wall of stones, which he at once commenced erecting. It was now completed, entirely surrounding the town, with loopholes at intervals all along through which to play upon the advancing enemy with the muskets which he had resolved to purchase from hunters and traders like myself.

I was duly introduced to the five queens, each of whose wigwams I visited in succession. These ladies were of goodly stature and comely in their appearance; they all possessed a choice assortment of very fine karosses of various descriptions, and their persons were adorned with a profusion of ornaments of beads and brass and copper wire. Sichely professed and was believed by his tribe to be a skilful rainmaker, viz. one having the power of creating rain when required for the fields and gardens. The rainmaker's art is a regular profession among the Bechuanas, and the individuals who practise it are much esteemed and highly venerated among

their fellow-men. They are supposed to work by supernatural agency ; and acting probably on the general principle that a prophet is not without honour save in his own country, they invariably practise their arts amongst tribes remote from their own particular districts. Their birth and original place of residence are always involved in mystery, and they pretend to have been suddenly created in some lonely cave, or on the summit of a mountain, from which they came in a state of manhood without undergoing the usual ordeal of birth. Some of these rainmakers attain to much higher reputation than their fellow necromancers : an illustrious character of this description is much sought after, and is often sent for from an amazing distance by a chief on whose dominions the periodical thunder-storms (which are often very partial) have failed to descend.

The modes in which they propitiate the clouds are various. The one most commonly practised is, by collecting a few leaves of each individual variety of tree in the forest, which they allow to simmer in large pots over a slow fire, while a sheep is killed by pricking it in the heart with a "lemue" or long sewing-needle, while the rainmaker is employed in performing a variety of absurd incantations. The steam arising from the simmering leaves is supposed to reach and propitiate the clouds, and the remainder of the day is spent in dances which are joined in by all the tribe and kept up till midnight, being

accompanied with songs having a long-continued chorus in which all join, and the burden of which is the power and praises of the rainmaker. It often, however, happens that the relentless clouds decline attending to the solicitations of the rainmaker, and the fields of young corn become parched and withered. Other schemes are then resorted to. A number of the young men sally forth, and, forming an extensive circle, they enclose the rocky face of some mountain-side in which the rock-loving klip-springer is likely to be met with, when, by gradually contracting their circle like our Highlanders of old, they generally manage to catch alive sundry klipspringers, whose voices are supposed to attract rain. The unfortunate little antelopes thus captured are paraded round the kraal, while the rainmaker, by pinching and tormenting them, induces them to scream. But as it often happens that these and all his other machinations prove unavailing, the rainmaker is at times obliged eventually to make a moonlight flitting and cut and run for it, when the services of another of the fraternity are courted.

When the rainmakers fail to fulfil their promises they always ascribe their want of success to the presence of some mysterious agency which has destroyed the effect of their otherwise infallible nostrums. One of these anti-rainmaking articles is ivory, which is believed to have great influence in driving away rain, in consequence of

which, in the summer season, they produce it only as the sun goes down, at which time it is brought for the trader's inspection carefully wrapped up in a kaross. I remember on one occasion incurring the censure of a whole tribe, who firmly believed me to have frightened the rain from their dominions by exposing a quantity of ivory at noon-day ; and on another occasion the chief of a certain tribe commanded a missionary with whom I am acquainted to remove all the rafters from the roof of his house, these having been pointed out by the rainmaker as obstructing the success of his incantations.

The Griquas, taking advantage of the superstitions of the Bechuanas, often practise on their credulity, and, a short time before I visited Sichely, a party of Griquas who were hunting in his territory had obtained from him several valuable karosses in barter for a little sulphur, which they represented as a most effectual medicine for guns, having assured Sichely that by rubbing a small quantity on their hands before proceeding to the field they would assuredly obtain the animal they hunted.

It happened in the course of my converse with the chief that the subject turned on ball-practice, when, probably relying on the power of his medicine, the king challenged me to shoot against him for a considerable wager, stipulating at the same time that his three brothers were to be permitted to assist him in the competition. The king

staked a couple of valuable karosses against a large measure filled with my gunpowder, and we then at once proceeded to the waggon, where the match was to come off, followed by a number of the tribe. Whilst Sichely was loading his gun, I repaired to the fore-chest of the waggon, where, observing that I was watched by several of the natives, I proceeded to rub my hands with sulphur, which was instantly reported to the chief, who directly joined me, and, clapping me on the back, entreated me to give him a little of my medicine for his gun, which I of course told him he must purchase. Our target being set up, we commenced firing ; it was a small piece of wood six inches long by four in breadth, and was placed on the stump of a tree at the distance of one hundred paces. Sichely fired the first shot, and very naturally missed it, upon which I let fly and split it through the middle. It was then set up again, when Sichely and his brothers continued firing, without once touching it, till night setting in put an end to their proceedings. This of course was solely attributed by all present to the power of the medicine I had used.

When Dr. Livingstone was informed of the circumstance he was very much shocked, declaring that in future the natives would fail to believe him when he denounced supernatural agency, having now seen it practised by his own countryman. I obtained several very fine karosses, as also ivory, ostrich-feathers, and sundry in-

teresting curiosities, in barter from Sichely and his tribe ; and at noon on the 27th we took leave of Sichely and started for Bakatla. In the evening of the following day I lost another horse of the distemper : it was the " Immense Brute ;" and next morning the chesnut pony also died. About midnight an immense herd of buffaloes came feeding slowly towards us, and, imagining our oxen to belong to their own party, they continued to advance until we were actually surrounded by them. I then arose in my sleep, and, having remarked in Sichuana to the natives that the buffaloes were very good, I once more lay down, utterly unconscious of what I had done or spoken.

On the afternoon of the 29th we outspanned at Bakatla. A party of Baralongs were then on a visit to Mosielely on a trading excursion for skins for the manufacture of karosses. The head-quarters of these men was situated to the westward of Motito, on the borders of the great Kalahari desert. Night set in with a terrific thunder-storm, which prevailed for several hours : the lightning was most painful to the eyes, and deafening peals of thunder continually burst above and around us. From the proximity of the explosions we entertained considerable fears for the safety of the natives in the town, for the lightning appeared repeatedly to strike in that direction ; and when the storm had subsided, a messenger from the king came down to the missionary's dwelling-

house to report that the kraal occupied by the six strangers had been struck by the electric fluid, and that one of them was killed on the spot, and the other five were more or less affected by the shock. Dr. Livingstone informed me that this melancholy event would entail great alarm and uneasiness upon Moselely, since all the tribes would blame him for the accident.

The following day was Sunday, and in the forenoon Dr. Livingstone and I visited Moselely, and inspected the kraal that had been struck by lightning. We found the natives engaged in the most absurd idolatrous rites to cleanse the kraal and the survivors from the effects of the electricity. Unlike the Romans of old, these five individuals did not consider themselves honoured by the partiality which the lightning had evinced for them; huddled together, we found them lying speechless and terrified upon the ground, their hearts having died within them. On the 1st of December, with Dr. Livingstone's kind assistance, I commenced making a new axletree for the waggon, and by the evening of that day week we had completed a good, substantial axletree of seasoned hard wood, mounted with iron skeins, and secured it in its place. The greatest difficulty we encountered in the accomplishment of our work was in welding the iron skeins and fixing them in their proper places. During my stay at Bakatla I traded extensively with the natives, and obtained from them a number of karosses and various

curiosities and articles of interest. It was the heat of summer, and the sun at noon was extremely overpowering; the atmosphere, however, was occasionally refreshed by thunderstorms, accompanied with grateful showers of rain, which, of course, was attributed to the power of the rainmaker, and the vale rang nightly with loud and joyous songs, re-echoing his praises in a prolonged chorus. Before leaving Bakatla my horse "Sunday" died of the distemper, which reduced my stud from ten to two; and, before dismissing this subject, I may mention that I managed to save these two from the distemper, and succeeded in bringing them back to the colony, by preventing them from eating grass and by keeping them covered at night with blankets.

On the 11th I took leave of my kind host Dr. Livingstone, and, after a steady march of many days, on the 2nd of January I reached Kuruman, where I was entertained by Mr. Moffat with his usual kindness and hospitality. The following day was Sunday, when I attended Divine service in the large church morning and evening, and saw sixteen men and women who had embraced the Christian faith baptized by Mr. Moffat. It was now the fruit season, and the trees in the gardens of the missionaries were groaning under a burden of the most delicious peaches, figs, and apples. The vines bore goodly clusters of grapes, but these had not yet ripened. My runaway Hottentots had passed through Kuruman

some time previous to my arrival, and it was reported that disease had overtaken them at the missionary station of Campbellsdorp, where they were now all four stretched upon a bed of sickness, and in a state of the most abject want and misery. Isaac had likewise made his appearance in due course, and he came boldly forward to claim his wages, which I honestly paid him. I left in Mr. Moffat's kind keeping one of the waggons with its contents (which we stowed away in a room obligingly lent me by Mr. Moffat for the purpose), and also the whole of my oxen, with the exception of one span, with which, on the evening of the 7th, I set out for Koning, which I reached at an early hour on the following morning, having marched during the greater portion of the night.

Leaving Koning on the afternoon of the 8th, I resumed my march for Daniel's-kuil. Between Koning and Daniel's-kuil occur two interesting caves, long famous as affording a residence and protection to hordes of marauding Bushmen. The larger of these caves is situated on the west side of the waggon-track ; it is of great size, and contains a perpetual fountain of delicious water, and its sides have been adorned by its Lilliputian inhabitants with correct likenesses of most of the game quadrupeds of Africa, as also unicorns, which of course they never saw, and must therefore have heard spoken of by other men. From this cave the Bushmen were wont to sally

forth not very long since and lift fat cattle from the sleek herds of their more industrious neighbours the Griquas and Bechuanas. Returning with these cattle, their custom was to drive them all into the cave, whence, being well supplied with water, they did not again proceed until the flesh was either rotten or consumed. It was in vain that the exasperated owners of the cattle followed on their traces to the Bushman-cave, for here they well knew it was madness to follow farther, as inevitable death would be the result, by the poisoned arrows of their subtle foes within. At length the Bushmen became so frequent and daring in their attacks, that a number of the Bechuanas held "a great talk" on the subject (as they say in America), and ended by resolving to attack the Bushmen, and accomplish their destruction at whatever cost.

Accordingly, when the next robbery was committed, the Bechuanas marched upon the Bushman-cave, armed with large oval shields and battle-axes ; and, entering the cave, they steadily advanced under cover of their shields, while the Bushmen's arrows rattled thick upon them like a storm of hail. The Bechuanas thus continued to advance until they came to close quarters, when they cut them down with their battle-axes. The other cave is situated to the eastward of the waggon-track ; here, on a similar occasion, fire was made use of to smoke out the Bushmen, when those who escaped death by suffocation fell by the battle-axes and assagais of their foes without.

When driven to extremity the Bushmen are extremely plucky, and show fight to the last. In the year 1847, a Bechuana chief, named Assyabona, who is nearly related to Mahura, despatched a strong party of his tribe, armed with guns and assagais, to accomplish the destruction of a strong horde of wild Bushmen, whose robberies had become so daring and extensive that they were the terror of all who dwelt a hundred miles around them. On this occasion a great number of Bushmen were destroyed, having been overtaken in open ground. One determined fellow, having hastily collected several of the quivers of his dying comrades, which were full of poisoned arrows, ensconced himself within three large stones, from which position he for a long time defied the whole hostile array of Bechuanas; shooting two of them dead on the spot, and wounding a number of others. Though continuing gallantly to defend himself, he seemed aware that he could not possibly escape; and while peppering at the Bechuanas and upbraiding them with cowardice, he called out to them, that, if they had not killed his brother (who lay dead beside him, and who was a famous marksman among his fellows), it would have gone hard with them that day. He was eventually finished with a shot in the forehead by a son of Mahura's, chief of the Batlapis, as he was in the act of discharging one of his diminutive yet deadly shafts.

On the 10th I marched from Daniel's-kuil, and early

on the 12th I encamped at Campbellsdorp where I found Mr. Bartlett and Captain Cornelius Kok in great force. Here I at length overtook my runaway Hottentots. Sickness and starvation had done their work upon them, and they were so altered in their appearance that I scarcely knew them. They were now acting as servants to the Griquas who had nursed them in their illness, and they were working hard to earn their bread. On inquiring of them why they had forsaken me, they said that they had started in a rash and thoughtless moment, and that, although they almost immediately repented the step they had taken, fear and shame prevented them from returning to their duty. Commiserating their condition, I presented them with the amount of their wages during the time they had remained with me, and, being now quite independent of their services, I allowed them to remain with the masters they had chosen. I here met an extremely plausible individual, a Dutchman, from the Bo-land or Cape district, who was *got up* in his rig at considerable expense. This fellow was swindling the Griquas right and left, purchasing from them all their best cattle at extravagant prices, and settling for them with paper notes, which *naturally* were forged. He represented himself as being one of a wealthy firm in Cape Town, and stated that two of his partners were then purchasing cattle among the Boers to the eastward, from whom they had already collected two thousand head;

which cool assertion the Griquas were silly enough to believe, and he left their country for the Bo-land with a large drove of fat oxen. Eventually, however, he was brought to justice, and I afterwards heard of his being safely quartered in the jail of Beaufort.

At a late hour on the 13th I outspanned my waggons on the fragrant bank of the lovely Vaal river by clear moonlight, and on the morrow, the water being then fortunately low, I crossed the river with little difficulty, and on the 20th I took the drift of the Great Orange River, but with very faint hopes that my worn-out oxen would succeed in dragging me through its treacherous sands, more especially since two Boers who had crossed an hour previous had deemed it necessary to inspan sixteen tearing well-conditioned oxen into their light waggons. I was right in my conjecture, for with infinite flogging and shouting I got the waggon half way through, when it stuck fast, and no efforts could prevail upon the oxen to move it a yard farther. A Griqua offered to lend me on hire a fresh span of able bodied oxen, when, with the help of these and some of my best, I got safely through, and once more encamped within her Majesty's dominions. While the waggon was sticking in the middle of the river a Boer took the drift from the opposite side with a light new waggon and twelve superb oxen, which bore him through in gallant style. Resuming my march for Colesberg, I trekked on till near midnight, when I lost

my way in the dark. The country here was parched and arid, not a blade of grass for the weary oxen, but hopeless sterility stretched far around.


On the 21st I left the Bushman to bring on the waggon while I walked ahead under a most terrific sun to the farm where I had purchased Prince and Bonteberg, while *en route* to the far interior. My costume consisted of a dilapidated wide-awake hat, which had run the gauntlet with many a grove of wait-a-bits, a dusty-looking ragged shirt, and a pair of still more ragged-looking canvas trousers, which were, moreover, amputated above the knee, while my face was adorned with a shaggy red beard, which *tout ensemble* imparted to me the appearance of one escaped from Bedlam. As I drew near the farm its inmates took fright at my wild appearance, and two of the Boers, timidly projecting their heads from the half-closed door, loudly shouted to me to lay down my gun. I however pretended not to understand, and advancing boldly I wished them good morning. One of these was the owner of the farm, and the man from whom I had bought the dogs, yet nevertheless he failed to recognise me. He still appeared to be much alarmed, and evidently looked upon me as a dangerous character; but, commiserating the transparent texture of my continuations, he offered to lend me a pair of leather "crackers." Declining the proffered apparel, I entered

the house without ceremony, and having come to an anchor I requested some milk. Here I was immediately recognised by the children as "de carle wha heb vor Bonteberg ha-quoch," viz. the man that bought Bonteberg.

On the 26th I marched at dawn of day, and in four hours I entered the village of Colesberg, where I found my old friends, the 91st, replaced by a detachment of the 45th. My first move was to visit the post-office, where I was very much disappointed to find no letters awaiting my arrival. Having off-loaded my waggon, I handed it over to Mr. Arnott, the resident blacksmith, to undergo repairs, of which it stood much in need. My Bechuana followers were extremely struck with the size and appearance of Colesberg, and the movements of the military elicited their unfeigned delight and approbation. On the 28th the village of Colesberg was enlightened with the presence of Mr. Kleinboy, who arrived with waggons from Kuruman. Having sought me out, he declared himself thoroughly penitent for all his former misdemeanours, and, expressing a wish again to join the service, I re-enlisted him.

On the 1st of February I left Colesberg, and reached Grahamstown on the forenoon of the 22nd, when I took up my residence with Captain Hogg of the 7th Dragoon Guards, in my old quarters at the barracks of the Cape Mounted Rifles. The officers of the 7th had

brought out with them a pack of fox-hounds, which, while they lasted, afforded excellent sport, but unfortunately the climate of Southern Africa, especially near the coast, is so very unfavourable for well-bred English dogs, that, although no trouble nor expense was spared in the management of these hounds, and fresh drafts were constantly exported from England, and litters of pups carefully reared in the colony, the pack nevertheless had considerably diminished. These hounds were under the especial surveillance of Captain Hogg, who hunted them in a manner which evinced his consummate skill and judgment in the manly and ennobling pursuit of the chase.



CHAPTER XXI.

Set out again for the Far Interior — Fort Beaufort — Purchase fresh Steeds and Oxen — My old servant Corollus rejoins me — Elephant Fountain once more — Hunt Elephants — Corriebely — Obligated to act very decidedly with Sicomy — Horses and Oxen taken in Pits — Two Dogs killed by a Leopard — A file of Bakalahari Women carrying water to the Desert — A sleeping Rhinoceros shot — Hunting in the neighbourhood of Lotlokane and Letlocbee — The Natives kill an Elephant — A grim Lion slain — Rheumatic Fever attacks me — Leave Bamangwato Country — The Game disturbed by Natives — Soobie — Watch nightly for Game from a place of Arabush — Vanquish a noble Lioness.

I CONTINUED in Grahamstown until the 7th day of March, when I set out once more on my weary journey for the distant forests of the far interior. Before leaving the town I settled my accounts with the merchants from whom I had obtained supplies, and who evidently seemed to consider my returning to the colony as a very doubtful event. I engaged a discharged soldier of the 91st, named George Martin, in the capacity of head servant. This man hailed from Haddington, and bore an excellent character on leaving the regiment. He was accustomed to the charge of horses, in which he took a great interest. My most important purchases in the sporting department

consisted of a valuable double-barrelled rifle, with spare shot-barrels by Westley Richards, which I obtained from Captain Hogg ; and two right good steeds, one of which was a very superior coal-black gelding, which I purchased of Captain Walpole of the Engineers for 20*l.*, which was considerably below its value. I named this horse Black Jack ; in paces and disposition he very much resembled my lamented Colesberg, and he was altogether one of the finest horses I ever mounted. His end was sudden and severe ; for on a subsequent expedition, along with another of my favourite horses, he was torn to pieces and consumed by a troop of ruthless lions. The other horse which I purchased was a grey ; and as it is probable that this horse may be introduced in future pages, under the designation of the "Old Grey," I trust the reader will not be confounded with the idea of the resurrection of the original "Old Grey."

On the morning of the 9th I reached Fort Beaufort, when I encamped at the mess-house of the 7th. I continued there until the morning of the 15th, when I resumed my march for the interior. In Fort Beaufort I purchased four right good horses from the officers of the garrison : one of these was a jet black steed, and was named by his late master Schwartland. This horse was one of the finest shooting-horses in Southern Africa, and understood his work so well that he seemed to follow the game with all the eagerness of a greyhound, and yet he would

suddenly halt in full career when I wished to fire, if I merely placed my hand upon his neck. From his back I subsequently shot many elephants and other game, and his name will often appear in after pages. At the farm of Messrs. Nelson and Blane I purchased two more horses, which I called Brown Jock and Mazeppa, and also a span of oxen and some milch cows.

On the 2nd of April I entered the village of Colesberg, where I was actively employed in making final preparations for my distant campaign until the 9th. I engaged two Hottentot servants named Booi and Kleinfeldt, the latter individual being one of those who had forsaken my banner at Boötlonamy, and I purchased two more valuable steeds, which increased my stud to ten very superior young horses. I also purchased a number of rough long-legged serviceable dogs of a variety of breeds, which, with several other ragged-looking tykes, that I subsequently purchased from Boers along the line of march, increased my kennel to about twenty business-like dogs. At sunrise on the 9th we marched out of the village and held on until we reached the Orange River at Boata's Drift, where we outspanned beneath the shade of a grove of willows. Having crossed the river on horseback, it proved too deep to take the waggons over, but I had the consolation to remark that the waters were on the ebb, and by the forenoon of the following day they had so far subsided that I was enabled

to cross the great river without wetting my cargo. The ascension of the opposite side proved extremely severe, being an almost perpendicular bank of soft sand, and I was obliged to relieve the waggon of half its load before the oxen could drag it to the more practicable road beyond.

I was now all anxiety to reach my Fountain of Elephants, and pushed on with all speed for Massouey. On the 15th, just as I had reached the Bastard kraal of Rhama, I fell in with my old servant Corollus, who had absconded from me at Boötlonamy. He was in company with the waggons belonging to Mr. David Hume, the trader, on their return to the colony, but, meeting with his old companions Kleinfeldt and Kleinboy, he resolved to turn about and re-enter my service, which I was not sorry for, as I was short of hands for the distant expedition I was about to make. I also fell in with Captain Arkwright and Mr. Christie, who were proceeding up the country on a similar expedition to my own.

On the 16th of May I halted at Chouaney, at the residence of Dr. Livingstone, who told me that one or two troops of elephants had been frequenting the district. With one of these I fell in on the 20th, when I had an opportunity of testing the sportsmanlike qualities of my new servant Martin. The troop consisted of nine bull elephants, the finest of which I shot, but Martin, after selecting the poorest of the lot, ultimately lost him. We

now pressed on as rapidly as possible for my favourite fountain Massouey, which we at length reached on the 29th.

I felt sincere pleasure in revisiting this very interesting spot. I found it well frequented by the elephants. Two troops of cows and three old bulls had drunk there on the preceding night. When the waggons came up to my old halting-place I took a hasty breakfast, and then started on the spoor of an enormous old bull. After following him north for about six miles we lost him in the spoor of a troop of cows; I accordingly followed the spoor of the cows, and soon came up with them. The troop consisted in all of about ten, but there were only three full-grown cows in the troop; each of these three, unluckily, went off in different directions. I rode within twenty yards of the best, and, halting, I put two balls close behind her shoulder, and, calling to Martin to finish her, I galloped after the second best. I soon got a view of her, and in three minutes I had turned her head towards camp, and presently I rolled her over with about six shots. Martin and the Bushman not appearing when two hours had elapsed, I rode to camp, where, to my astonishment, I found my servant, who had actually lost my elephant through the most inexcusable want of pluck. I was very much annoyed, and regretted having attacked the troop at all.

At dawn of day Mollyeon and I walked to the fountain

to seek for elephants' spoor. A troop of cows, several small bulls, and two well-grown bulls, had drunk during the night, besides an immense number of rhinoceroses, perhaps twenty. I made a hasty breakfast, and then took up the spoor of the two best bulls, with one after-rider. The spoor led nearly south-east. After following it for about six miles we found ourselves in an elevated part of the forest, which commanded a fine view of the mountains to the east, and here Mollyee climbed to the summit of a sandle-wood tree to try, if he could see the elephants. He could not see those we were spooring; but he saw three other bull elephants, about three parts grown, feeding slowly along, steering about north; after a short and dangerous conflict I slew the best with five bullets.

We then followed up the spoor of one of our first elephants, which had now taken a northerly course. After following it up very sharply for about five miles through very open country, we reached some dense wait-a-bit cover, where we discovered our friend hiding himself within twenty yards of us. He took away at once through the thickest of the cover, and on my approaching for a shot he made the most terrific charge after me, sending large thorny trees flying like grass before him. When he halted after his charge, I sent a ball through his ribs, and he then made clean away, and got into better country. Here I fought with him for about an hour, and gave him sixteen shots from the saddle. My horse was

extremely troublesome, and invariably destroyed the correctness of my aim; the elephant was fierce and active, and made repeated charges with very destructive intentions; at length he turned and regained the dense thorny cover, in which I lost him.

On the morning of June 1st, before the sun rose, Mollyeon and I walked to the fountain to see if elephants had drunk. Ten bull elephants had been there, and had all gone off together, holding a south-easterly course; this was glorious. I started on the spoor with five natives, and Kleinfeldt as after-rider on Dreadnought. I took eight of my dogs, all led in strings, and rode Schwartland, my best shooting-horse. After following the spoor for about five miles, we found ourselves to leeward of the elephant I had shot on Saturday, and here the elephants had smelt the blood, and started off in great fear, going clean away through open country, steering one point west of south. They got into an old elephant footpath, and held steadily on for many miles, not halting to break one branch, or to plough the ground. The leading native said he did not expect to see them; and I was certainly of the same opinion. At length they got into a thickly wooded part of the country, and, although they were still holding clean away up wind, they had occasionally halted to feed. Here I started an oryx. We presently reached the border of a very wide open country, where the spoor took a turn to the east. We proceeded a few hundred yards farther,

when we had the unexpected satisfaction to behold the mighty squadron drawn up in the open cover, in open order, two hundred yards ahead. Some of them stood motionless as statues, others moved slowly here and there, and browsed upon the trees.

The troop consisted of ten bull elephants: eight of them were about three parts grown; the other two were enormous old elephants, in magnificent condition. We halted and gave the dogs water, and I then rode slowly round the elephants to ascertain which was the best. After riding twice along their front, they all, as if by one accord, turned their faces to me, and advanced leisurely within forty yards, giving me an excellent opportunity of making my choice. At length they saw me, and, sounding the alarm, all made off together in great consternation. I galloped alongside of them to make my final choice, and selected the largest elephant. I had some difficulty in getting him clear of his comrades, some of which were extremely fierce, and were trumpeting along, with their tails and trunks aloft. At length I got him clear: all my dogs had gone off to the right and left after other elephants, and Dreadnought came galloping up to me, having thrown my after-rider, who did not succeed in recapturing him.

My elephant now, hearing the barking and trumpeting on every side, halted beside a bushy tree, with his head high, and right to me; but presently turning his broad-

side, I gave it him sharp right and left after the shoulder ; and the dogs, hearing the shots, came up to my assistance. The conflict now became fast and furious ; I had very pleasant work with this fine old elephant. My horse behaved very well, and his fury and attention were chiefly directed towards the dogs, who stuck well to him ; but he was by far the toughest elephant to finish that I have ever engaged with. I gave him thirty-five balls, all about and behind his shoulder, and discharged at distances varying from fifteen to thirty-five yards, before he would halt and die. At length he reduced his pace to a very slow walk ; blood flowed from his trunk and all his wounds, leaving the ground behind him a mass of gore ; his frame shuddered violently, his mouth opened and shut, his lips quivered, his eyes were filled with tears ; he halted beside a thorny tree, and having turned right about he rocked forwards and backwards for a few seconds, and, falling heavily over, his ancient spirit fled. The natives now came up, and, having promised to go on the spoor of my horse Dreadnought, I returned to Massouey, having off-saddled for an hour.

No elephants having drunk at the fount for some days, on the 5th I resolved to leave my favourite Massouey. I accordingly marched about one P.M. I passed Corriebely an hour before dark : there was water enough for the horses. Here I met Mutchuisho with a large party of Bechuanas, sent by Sicomy to endeavour to make me come

and trade with him. I halted for an hour after sunset, and then inspanned and trekked on till the moon went down, when I halted near my old outspanning-place, having performed a very long and difficult march.

On the 6th, a very cold morning, we trekked at dawn of day, and in about three hours reached Lesausau, a bold and romantic gorge in the Bamangwato mountains, in the depths of which was a strong fountain. Sicomy soon made his appearance, and bothered all day; but he did not produce any ivory. At night I watched the fountain in the bold ravine, and shot two old black rhinoceroses, bull and cow, with my smooth bore carrying six to the pound. Both of these ran considerable distances, but were found by the natives. Along with the cow *borèlé* were two other old bulls, who fought together for three hours alongside of me.

On the 7th Sicomy made his appearance early, and towards evening bought powder and lead with seven elephants' teeth. Soon after this bargain was concluded he ordered men to take away the teeth, and he threw me back the powder; but on my kicking back the powder, and swearing I would shoot the first man who touched the ivory, he relinquished the idea.

On the succeeding day Sicomy prowled about the waggons all day, and bothered me so that I at last lost my temper, and swore at him. The natives held a consultation for a few minutes, which ended by their

saying that they were all going to leave me. I said that I was happy to hear it. They then decamped to a man; but in an hour four of my old acquaintances appeared, and said that the captain wished me to come and see him; but I replied that I was sick, and going to sleep. In another hour he made his appearance; and on asking him what I had done that he had called all his men away, he replied that they had gone away to have a sleep. Presently Arkwright and Christie rode up to my waggons: theirs were at hand. On the march they had lost one ox and two horses in pitfalls. At night Arkwright and I watched the water, but did not get a shot.

On the 9th Sicomy brought me ivory. He asked me to go to my hunting-ground, saying that he would trade with me there. He was very anxious to separate the two parties. As soon as possible, therefore, I inspanned, and trekked down the broad strath, steering south, although the natives asserted that I should find no water, and tried to guide me north. After trekking about eight miles, much to the annoyance of the Bamangwatos I discovered the residence of the Bahwas, where I halted for the night, having sent a message to Schooey, the old chief, that I would trade with him next day.

The next day the old chief, with his wives and nobility, appeared at an early hour; and by midday I had purchased several tusks of elephants; also two very fine ka-

rosses of leopard-skin, &c. I then inspanned, and in two hours I got clear of the Bamangwato mountains, when I held about east, through thick forest, halting for the night beside a small fount, where the horses could not drink. On the march pallah were abundant and very tame.

On the morning of the 12th Sicomy came to my fire-side, and said he was going to trade with me. A party of Bakalahari had arrived a little before, bearing twenty-nine elephants' teeth. After some trouble we set the trading agoing, and in about three hours I had purchased ten bull and ten cow elephants' teeth for ten muskets, and seven other cow elephants' teeth for powder, lead, and flints. I then bought two kobaoba knobkerries. At this moment natives came in, and reported elephants to have drunk within a mile during the night. This caused an immense bustle: in twenty minutes I was under way, with two after-riders and a party of good spoorers, followed by about a hundred and fifty starving natives. We took up the spoor a mile to the south, and followed it due east until the sun went down, when we halted for the night. While spooring we met the country in flames far and wide, but we crossed the fire, and found the spoor beyond. We saw a troop of eight fat male elands, and a troop of eight giraffes.

Next day we followed the spoor for several miles in an easterly course, when it took a turn to the north-west, through most horrible wait-a-bit thorns. About midday

we came up with the elephants. The troop consisted of one mighty old bull, and two bulls three-parts grown. I first shot the best of the two small bulls, and then the old bull. The natives and all my dogs had kept him in view, and one fellow had pricked him in the stern with an assagai. Upon the strength of this the Bechuanas came up and claimed him as theirs when he fell ; but on my threatening to leave their country they relinquished the idea.

On the 16th and 17th I bagged two first-rate bull elephants in the level forests to the eastward of Mangmaluky.

On the 18th, after breakfast, I rode to Mangmaluky, to water my horses. One old bull elephant had been there, but the natives had too much flesh, and would not spoor. I rested all day, expecting my waggons, but they did not appear. At night a panther came within ten yards of my fire, and killed Cradock and disabled Wolf, my two best elephant-dogs.

On the 21st I held south, down a beautiful wide valley full of very green trees of various kinds. This was evidently a favourite haunt with the elephants : every tree bore their marks. At the southern end of this valley was one of the most interesting fountains I ever beheld ; the water came gushing down through the wildest chasm, formed of one succession of huge masses of rock of all shapes and sizes, thrown loosely together in some places, and in others piled high one above another, as if by the

hand of some giant. All the ground and rock about the fountain were covered with a layer of elephants' dung about a foot deep. We had proceeded about half-way up the valley when we heard elephants trumpeting ahead of us: it was a very fine troop of cows. There was one cow in the troop larger, I think, than any I had ever before seen. On this occasion I was extremely unfortunate. I began by sending two balls into the shoulder of the fine cow just as they were charging into a dense cover of wait-a-bits. The dogs took after two calves, which I was obliged to shoot; the natives, in attempting to assagai them, killed Bluma and wounded Alert in the loin. The elephants were hiding in the thorns, and no man knew or seemed to care where they were. At this moment we beheld another fine troop of cow elephants going along the wooded mountain-side opposite to us. I immediately made for them, and had the mortification to see them gain a neck in the mountain just above my head as I got within two hundred yards of them. I now returned to the thorny cover, where we found the cows concealed. The natives eventually drove them out on the wrong side of the cover without warning me, and, to my extreme vexation, this fine troop of cows got away without my killing one. I was extremely sorry to lose the large cow elephant: she carried a pair of most beautiful and perfect teeth. I slept near the fountain, where I picked up a piece of a tooth of a cow elephant.

On the 29th of June I reached a water called Lotlokane, and hunted in the neighbourhood for several days, bagging some very fine elephants.

On the 13th of July I held west with Mollyeon and about twenty natives on the spoor of bull elephants two days old. In the desert I came upon a troop of about twenty elands, the best of which I rode into and slew. In the evening we took up fresher spoor of three old bull elephants ; but night setting in, we halted beneath a shady tree.

Early in the morning we resumed the spoor, which led us due west along the borders of the desert without a check until sundown. We had now spoorred these elephants a very great distance, and the horses had not had water since the morning of the preceding day. I felt compassion for the thirsty steeds, and was on the point of turning, when lo ! a string of Bakalahari women were seen half a mile before us, each bearing on her head an immense earthen vase and wooden bowl containing water. They had been to a great distance to draw water at a small fountain, and were now returning to their distant desert home. This was to us a perfect godsend. The horses and dogs got as much as they could drink, and all our vessels were replenished. The sun being now under, we halted for the night.

At sunrise we resumed the spoor, and after following it for about ten miles, and finding that these elephants had

gone clean away into the desert beyond the reach of man, we gave it up, and made for the fountain where the women had drawn the water on the preceding day. On reaching the fountain we found that four bull elephants had drunk there during the night. It was a soft, sandy soil, and the spoor was beautifully visible. I had never seen larger spoor than that of two of these ; they had fed slowly away from the fountain, and we followed on with high hopes of seeing them that day.

At length we got into a more densely wooded country, and presently observed the elephants standing in the forest about one hundred yards off. Having succeeded in securing the dogs, I shifted my saddle to Jock, and rode slowly forward to inspect the mighty game. Two of the elephants were but three parts grown ; the other two were very large, but one of them was a great deal taller and stouter than the other. This immense elephant, which was, I think, decidedly the largest I had ever seen, had unfortunately both his tusks broken short off close to the lip ; I therefore hunted his comrade, who carried a pair of very beautiful and perfect tusks. At the sixth shot he came to a stand and presently fell. I then dismounted and ran up to him, when he rose to his feet and stood some time, and then walked a few paces and fell again and died. On going up to him I found that he carried the finest teeth I had yet obtained ; they must have weighed one hundred pounds each. He was an extremely

old bull, and had been once much wounded with assagais, the blades of two of which were found in his back.

On the 17th I made for camp, and held through a fine open country lying north-west from Corriebely. In following some ostriches I came upon an extremely old and noble black rhinoceros lying fast asleep in some low wait-a-bits. The birds having tried in vain to waken him, I fired from the saddle. The first ball hit him as he lay in the shoulder; the second near his heart, as he gained his feet. In an instant the dogs were round him; he set off down hill at a steady canter, and led me a chase of a mile, when he came to a stand, his shoulder failing him. At this instant I beheld a troop of about twenty fine elands trotting before me on the open slope; I therefore quickly finished the black rhinoceros with two more balls, and then gave chase to the elands. I bagged the two best in the troop, a bull and cow, the latter about the fattest I have ever seen. I brought the bull within one hundred yards of the chukuroo.

At dawn next day I shot, from the spot I had slept on, a springbok, running, through the heart, at one hundred yards. After cutting off the horns of the black rhinoceros, I held on for Letlocbee, and slept at Lebotane, a very strong and perpetual fountain.

On the 19th at sunrise I pursued my march to the famous fountain of Letlocbee, to which I removed my camp. On the 24th I left Letlocbee, and marched upon Lotlokane.

In the forenoon of the next day I rode out to look for koodoos, without success. While riding through the forest I came upon the bloody spoor of an elephant ; he had been evidently hunted by natives. The elephant was not far away, for, following the spoor a few hundred yards, I came upon about sixty natives, who were hanging the flesh in garlands upon the thorny trees all around. This was an old bull elephant, and was quite lame, when the Bechuanas found him, from a ball-wound in the shoulder. On returning to camp, one of my Hottentots, who had been after some strayed oxen, stated that he had come upon a buffalo newly killed by a lion, and that the lion was lying in the bushes close by, watching his prey. Having taken some coffee, I saddled up three horses, and rode for the lion, with Booi and Kleinboy carrying my Moore and Westley Richards, and accompanied by all my dogs. As we approached the carcase of the buffalo, which lay in a wait-a-bit thorn cover, the dogs all dashed away to my left, and in an instant they gave tongue, which was immediately followed by the deep and continued growling of the lion ; he seemed to be advancing right to where we stood. I turned my head to ask Kleinboy for my shooting-horse, which he had ridden to the field of battle, but my trusty after-riders had fled on hearing the first growl of the advancing lion. I beheld Booi swept out of the saddle by the bough of a tree, and fall heavily to the ground with my pet rifle ; while Kleinboy,

with my other gun, was charging panic-stricken in another direction. After a short chase I came up with Kleinboy, who did not lack my blessing ; and having changed horses and got my gun from him, I galloped to meet the grim lion.

Ye gods ! what a savage he looked. The whole of his mane was deeply tinged with the blood of the buffalo, and the rays of the declining sun added to it a lustre which imparted to the now exasperated lion a look of surpassing fierceness. He was making for the adjacent rocky mountains, and he marched along in front of the dogs with his tail stuck straight out, stepping along with an air of the most consummate pride and independence. There was not a moment to lose, so I galloped forward on one side, and then rode in slowly to get a near shot ; as he approached I came within thirty yards of him, and, halting my horse, I fired for his heart from the saddle. On receiving the ball he wheeled about, when I gave him the second a little below the first ; he then walked or ran about ten yards forward and fell dead. This was a very large old lion ; he had cleaned his buffalo very nicely, dragging up all the offal into a heap at a distance from the carcase, and he had watched it all day to keep away the vultures, &c. The buffalo carried a very fine head.

On the 26th, feeling in very indifferent health, I remained at home, and stretched the lion's skin.

The next day after breakfast I rode up the wild glen

above camp, intending to seek for bastard gemsbok on the other side of the mountains. I had ridden half-way up the glen, when, lo ! the long-wished for lovely sable antelope stood right in my path ; a princely old buck : he stood about two hundred yards ahead looking at me. Having heard that dogs can easily catch this antelope, and having all my dogs at my heels, I sent them ahead, and fired a shot to encourage them ; in half a minute they were at the heels of the potaquaine, and turned him down hill. He crossed the glen before me, and dashed up a very rough and rocky pass in the rocks to my right, the dogs following, but considerably thrown out. I listened to hear a bay, but listened in vain ; to follow on horse-back was impossible. I therefore galloped round to an opposite point, and listened with breathless anxiety, standing in my stirrups to catch one sharp note from my trusty dogs. Nor did I wait long : in a distant hollow in the rocks I could faintly hear my dogs at bay.

My heart beat high ; it must be the sable antelope, and the dogs would never leave him. Already I felt that he was mine, and with a joyous heart I urged Mazeppa over the most fearful masses of adamantine rock, and at last came into the hollow, where my dogs were keeping up a furious bay. Some thick bushes concealed the game from my view ; I peeped over these, and, to my intense disappointment, instead of the sable antelope I beheld an old bull koodoo fighting gallantly for

his life. I bowled him over with a shot in the heart; and rode to follow two other sable antelopes which I had seen on the face of a rocky hill while galloping round the rocks to seek for my dogs. I had ridden a few hundred yards, when, high above me on the shoulder of a rocky and well-wooded mountain on the opposite side of the ravine, I detected a fourth sable antelope, a fine old buck. I rode into the deep ravine, and, having secured the steeds, I stripped to my shirt, and ascended the bold face to stalk him.

I held for a little to leeward of where I had marked him; the Bushman followed with Boxer on a string. When I gained the summit I proceeded with extreme caution, and at length beheld him through the trees within a hundred yards of me; I crept about ten yards nearer, and then lay till he should move; this he presently did. He walked obligingly forward, and stood broadside in all his glory, with his magnificent scimitar-shaped horns sweeping back over his haunches. I fired. The ball broke his fore-leg in the shoulder, and he dropped on his face, but, recovering himself, he gained his legs, and limped slowly over the ridge. Boxer immediately appeared, and was beside me just as I peeped over the ridge, and beheld the wounded buck looking back within fifty yards of me. On seeing Boxer, he turned about, and, as he turned, I sent my second ball through his ribs. He then disappeared, and stumbled

down the rocky mountain side, with Boxer at his heels. I followed as fast as could be, and found him half-way down the mountain, sitting on his haunches at bay, where I finished him with a shot in the heart. This was a magnificent sable antelope in the prime of life; he was very fat, and the flesh was excellent.

On the 28th I rode through the hills in quest of potaquaine, and went over a deal of rough ground on foot, and saw spoor, but no potaquaine. In the evening I took some bedding up the glen, and slept there.

I had lain in great pain all night, and in the morning of the 29th I found myself attacked with acute rheumatic fever. I had just strength to gain my waggons, when the disease came on in full force, swelling up all the joints of my body, and giving me the most excruciating torture. I could not move hand nor foot nor turn on my bed. I had no medicine except salts; these I made use of, and bled myself, and in about eight days the intense pains left me, but left me so weak that I could not stand.

On the morning of the 4th of August I determined to leave the Bamangwato country and to return to Sichely by way of Massouey, which place I reached on the 15th. It was, however, infested by natives, and all the game gone. I accordingly trekked for Lepeby, which I reached the next day. Here too the natives had gathered, so I proceeded on to Soobie; where I found the skull of a very

large lion, which the natives said had been killed by another lion.

At night I lay by the water with Kleinboy; abundance of game came and drank, but it was too dark to shoot with any certainty. About midnight a lion and a lioness came within ten yards of us before we noticed them. I was lying half asleep, but detected Kleinboy removing the big rifle from my side: he made a lucky shot, the ball passed through the lion's heart. He bounded forward about fifty yards, and, groaning fearfully, he died. Presently we heard the hyænas and jackals feasting on him, and before morn he was consumed. After some time the lioness re-approached the water to seek her mate, and drew nearer and nearer to us, roaring most fearfully; it was truly enough to make the stoutest heart quail. Kleinboy's quite failed him; and presently, hearing other lions approaching on the opposite side of the fount, I certainly felt that we were in danger, and accordingly agreed to light a fire, which was soon blazing cheerfully. I continued to watch the water from my deadly lair, both by day and night, till the 1st of September, enjoying extraordinary sport, and securing uncommonly fine specimens of the heads of all the varieties of game frequenting the district.

On the 1st of September, about twelve o'clock, Mollyee came and told me that my cattle-herd had come upon four wildebeests killed by a troop of lions. I immediately sent

for the steeds and rode to the spot, with Martin and the Bushman as after-riders, and accompanied by all my dogs. On reaching the ground, the dogs immediately took up scent, and went beating up the wind. I rode after, hunting them on, and presently I missed Boxer and Alert. Wolf now beat up a scent to windward, on which he afterwards went off at full speed, and was soon heard at bay with a lion. Just as Wolf started I heard a dog bark to leeward, and, riding hard in that line, I found Lassie barking at a large bush, in which the lions had taken shelter, but were gone. I was followed by poor cripple Argyll, who went boldly in and took up the scent. I lost sight of Argyll in the bushes. I then turned my face, as Wolf had gone, and rode hard to seek him ; at length he came up to me, quite exhausted with his exertions.

I rode back to seek Boxer, Alert, and Argyll. On coming to the place where Argyll had gone off, I found lions' spoor, and the spoor of the dogs on the top of it. After holding this spoor for a few hundred yards I met my dogs, who, returning, led me to the game I sought—it was a noble lioness. As I approached I first beheld her great, round face and black-tipped ears peeping over the low bushes. On riding up she obstinately kept her full front to me, although the dogs were barking close around her : at length she exposed a raking side shot, and the ball smashed her shoulder. She then

charged among the dogs, without doing any harm. At my second shot Schwartzland was unsteady and spoilt my aim; the ball, however, passed through the middle of her foot from side to side. I beckoned to Martin for my Moore, and, having got it, I rode up within a few yards of the lioness and gave her a shot, which crippled her in her other shoulder. She then fell powerless on the ground, and I fired my fourth shot for her heart: on receiving it she rolled over on her side and died. I cut off her head and the ten nails of her two fore feet, and rode to camp, where I found that the rascally Hottentots, taking advantage of Martin's absence, had boned all my rich game-broth, replacing it with cold water. It blew a very stiff breeze of wind while I was hunting the lions, which entirely prevented me from hearing the dogs bark. The evening being very cold and windy, I did not watch the water. Lions roared around our camp all night.

CHAPTER XXII.

A Lion shot from my Watching-hole at Midnight — Six Lions drink close beside me — A Lioness slain — A Rhinoceros bites the dust — Moslakose Fountain — My Shooting-hole surrounded with Game — Pallahs, Sassaybys, Zebras, &c. — A Rhooze-Rheebok shot — Extraordinary Circumstance — My fiftieth Elephant bagged — Interesting Fountains on the Hills — Leave my Waggon for the Hills — Struggle with a Boa Constrictor — Lions too numerous to be agreeable — Five Rhinoceroses shot as they came to drink — A venomous Snake.

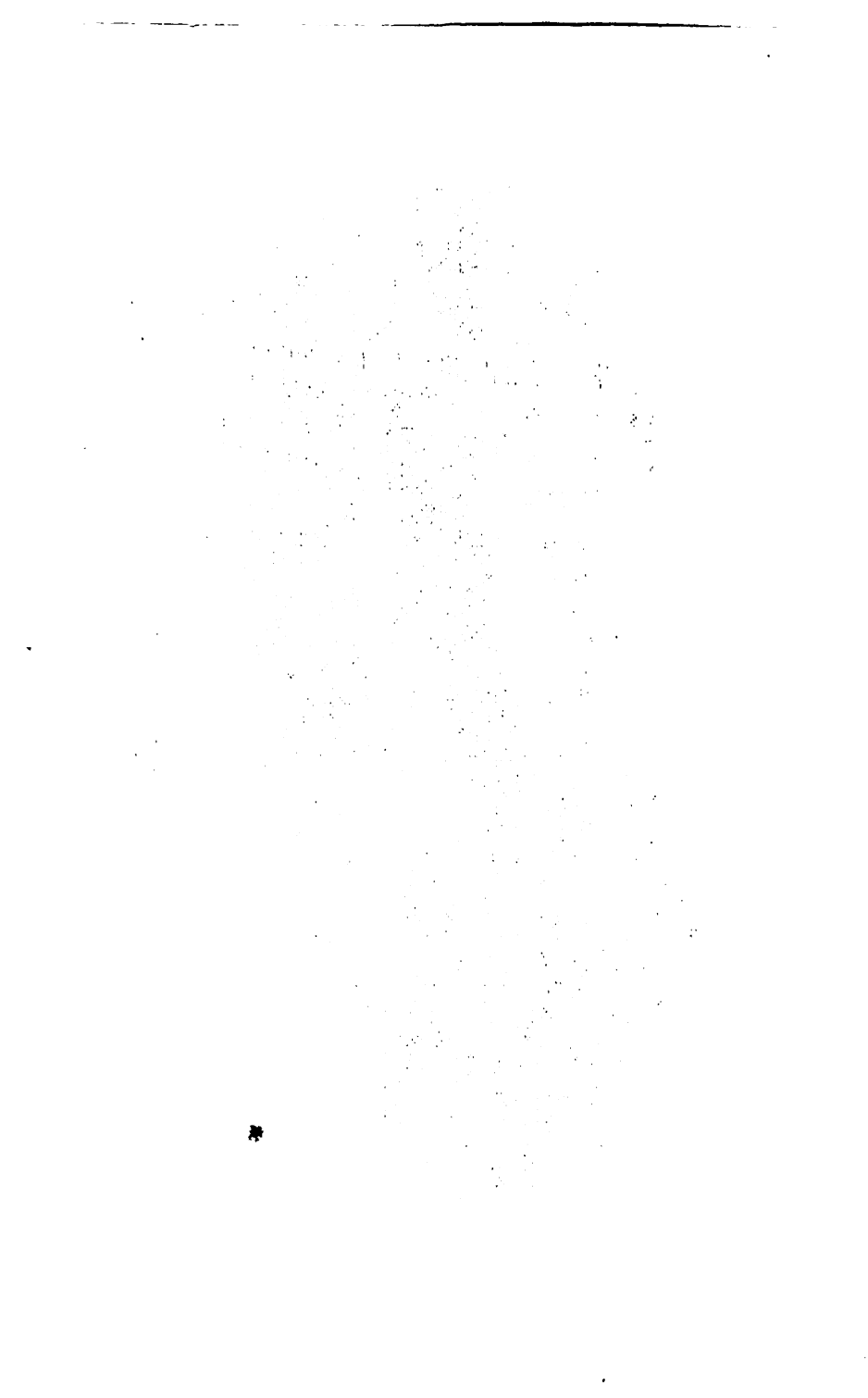
ON the afternoon of the 3rd of September I watched the fountain. Towards sunset one blue wildebeest, six zebras, and a large herd of pallahs, were all drinking before me. I lay enjoying contemplation for at least fifteen minutes, and, most of them having then slaked their thirst, I sent a ball through the heart of the best headed pallah. I then took a long shot at the blue wildebeest bull, and sent the other ball into his shoulder. I now came to the camp, and ordered the pallah to be placed in front of my hole beside the water, to attract the lions. Having taken my coffee, I returned to the water with Kleinboy and Mollyee. It was bright moonlight. We had scarcely lain down when the terrible voice of a lion

was heard a little to the east ; the jackals were feasting over the remains of the white rhinoceros of yesterday, and only one or two occasionally came and snuffed at the pallah. Presently a herd of zebras, accompanied by elands, approached the water, but were too timid to come in and drink : a troop of wild dogs now came boldly up, and were walking off with the pallah, when I fired into them. They made off, but immediately returning, and again seizing my pallah, I fired again, and wounded one of them.

Soon after we had lain down a thundering clattering of hoofs was heard coming up the vley, and on came an immense herd of blue wildebeest. They were very thirsty, and the leading cow very soon came boldly up and drank before me. I sent a ball through her ; she ran sixty yards up the slope behind me, and fell dead. Her comrades then thundered across the vley, and took up a position on the opposite rising ground. In two minutes the hyænas and jackals had attacked the carcase of this wildebeest. Soon after this a lion gave a most appalling roar on the bushy height close opposite to us, which was succeeded by a deathlike stillness which lasted for nearly a minute. I had then only one shot in my four barrels, and I hastily loaded the other barrel of my Westley Richards, and with breathless attention I kept the strictest watch in front, expecting every moment to see the mighty and terrible king of beasts approaching ; but he was too cun-



Stopping a Poacher.



ning. He saw all the other game fight shy of the water, so he made a circuit to leeward to get the wind off the fountain. Soon after he roared I heard a number of jackals bothering him, as if telling him to come across the vley to the wildebeest : he growled from side to side, as if playing with them, and after this all was still.

I had listened with intense anxiety for about fifteen minutes longer, when I heard the hyænas and jackals give way on either side behind me from the carcass of the wildebeest, and, turning my head slowly round, I beheld a huge and majestic lion, with a black mane which nearly swept the ground, standing over the carcass. He seemed aware of my proximity, and lowering his head he at once laid hold of the wildebeest and dragged it some distance up the hill. He then halted to take breath, but did not expose a broadside, and in a quarter of a minute he again laid hold of the wildebeest and dragged it about twelve yards farther towards the cover, when he again raised his noble head and halted to take breath.

I had not an instant to lose ; he stood with his right side exposed to me in a very slanting position ; I stretched my left arm across the grass, and, taking him rather low, I fired : the ball took effect, and the lion sank to the shot. All was still as death for many seconds, when he uttered a deep growl, and slowly gaining his feet he limped toward the cover, roaring mournfully as he went. When he got into the thorny bushes he stumbled

through them as he moved along, and in half a minute I heard him halt and growl fearfully, as if dying. I had now every reason to believe that he was either dead or would die immediately, and if I did not seek him till the morning I knew very well that the hyænas and jackals would destroy him. I accordingly went up to camp, and, having saddled two horses, I and Martin rode to seek him, taking all the dogs, led in strings by the natives. On reaching the carcase of the wildebeest we slipped the dogs, and they went off after the hyænas and jackals : we listened in vain for the deep growl of the lion, but I was persuaded that he was dead, and rode forward to the spot where I had last heard him growl. Lassie, now coming up, commenced barking at a bush in front of me, and, riding round, I had the immense satisfaction to behold the most magnificent old black-maned lion stretched out before me.

The ball had entered his belly a little before the flank and traversed the length and breadth of his body, crippling him in the opposite shoulder. No description could give a correct idea of the surpassing beauty of this most majestic animal, as he lay still warm before me. I lighted a fire and gazed with delight upon his lovely mane, his massive arms, his sharp yellow nails, his hard and terrible head, his immense and powerful teeth, his perfect beauty and symmetry throughout ; and I felt that I had won the noblest prize that this wide world could yield to a sports-

man. Having about fifteen natives with me, I sent for rheims and the lechter-uit, and we bore the lion to camp.

On my way from the water to get the horses and dogs, I shot an extremely old bull black rhinoceros with a single ball: he dropped to the shot. His horns were quite worn down and amalgamated, resembling the stump of an old oak-tree.

On the afternoon of the 4th I deepened my hole and watched the water. As the sun went down two graceful springboks and a herd of pallah came and drank, when I shot the best pallah in the troop. At night I watched the water with Kleinboy: very soon a cow black rhinoceros came and drank, and got off for the present with two balls in her. A little afterwards two black rhinoceroses and two white ones came to the water-side. We both fired together at the finest of the two black rhinoceroses; she ran three hundred yards, and fell dead. Soon after this the other black rhinoceros came up again and stood at the water-side; I gave her one ball after the shoulder; she ran a hundred yards and fell dead. In half an hour a third old borèlé appeared, and, having inspected the two dead ones, he came up to the water-side. We fired together; he ran two hundred yards and fell dead. I felt satisfied with our success and gave it up for the night.

By the following evening the natives had cleared away the greater part of two of the rhinoceroses which

lay right in the way of the game approaching the water ; I, however, enforced their leaving the third rhinoceros, which had fallen on the bare rising ground, almost opposite to my hiding-place, in the hope of attracting a lion, as I intended to watch the water at night. Soon after the twilight had died away, I went down to my hole with Kleinboy and two natives, who lay concealed in another hole, with Wolf and Boxer ready to slip, in the event of wounding a lion.

On reaching the water I looked towards the carcase of the rhinoceros, and, to my astonishment, I beheld the ground alive with large creatures, as though a troop of zebras were approaching the fountain to drink. Kleinboy remarked to me that a troop of zebras were standing on the height. I answered, " Yes : " but I knew very well that zebras would not be capering around the carcase of a rhinoceros. I quickly arranged my blankets, pillow, and guns in the hole, and then lay down to feast my eyes on the interesting sight before me. It was bright moonlight, as clear as I need wish, and within one night of being full moon. There were six large lions, about twelve or fifteen hyænas, and from twenty to thirty jackals, feasting on and around the carcasses of the three rhinoceroses. The lions feasted peacefully, but the hyænas and jackals fought over every mouthful, and chased one another round and round the carcasses, growling, laughing, screeching, chattering, and howling

without any intermission. The hyænas did not seem afraid of the lions, although they always gave way before them ; for I observed that they followed them in the most disrespectful manner, and stood laughing, one or two on either side, when any lions came after their comrades to examine pieces of skin or bones which they were dragging away. I had lain watching this banquet for about three hours, in the strong hope that, when the lions had feasted, they would come and drink. Two black and two white rhinoceroses had made their appearance, but, scared by the smell of the blood, they had made off.

At length the lions seemed satisfied. They all walked about with their heads up, and seemed to be thinking about the water ; and in two minutes one of them turned his face towards me, and came on ; he was immediately followed by a second lion, and in half a minute by the remaining four. It was a decided and general move, they were all coming to drink right bang in my face, within fifteen yards of me.

I charged the unfortunate, pale, and panting Kleinboy to convert himself into a stone, and knowing, from old spoor, exactly where they would drink, I cocked my left barrel, and placed myself and gun in position. The six lions came steadily on along the stony ridge, until within sixty yards of me, when they halted for a minute to reconnoitre. One of them stretched out his massive arms on the rock and lay down ; the others then came

on, and he rose and brought up the rear. They walked, as I had anticipated, to the old drinking-place, and three of them had put down their heads and were lapping the water loudly, when Kleinboy thought it necessary to shove up his ugly head. I turned my head slowly to rebuke him, and again turning to the lions I found myself discovered.

An old lioness, who seemed to take the lead, had detected me, and, with her head high and her eyes fixed full upon me, she was coming slowly round the corner of the little vley to cultivate further my acquaintance! This unfortunate coincidence put a stop at once to all further contemplation. I thought, in my haste, that it was perhaps most prudent to shoot this lioness, especially as none of the others had noticed me. I accordingly moved my arm and covered her: she saw me move and halted, exposing a full broadside. I fired; the ball entered one shoulder and passed out behind the other. She bounded forward with repeated growls, and was followed by her five comrades all enveloped in a cloud of dust; nor did they stop until they had reached the cover behind me, except one old gentleman, who halted and looked back for a few seconds, when I fired, but the ball went high. I listened anxiously for some sound to denote the approaching end of the lioness; nor listened in vain. I heard her growling and stationary, as if dying. In one minute her comrades crossed the vley a little below me,





Nocturnal adventure with Six Lions.

and made towards the rhinoceros. I then slipped Wolf and Boxer on her scent, and, following them into the cover, I found her lying dead within twenty yards of where the old lion had lain two nights before. This was a fine old lioness, with perfect teeth, and was certainly a noble prize ; but I felt dissatisfied at not having rather shot a lion, which I had most certainly done if my Hottentot had not destroyed my contemplation.

On the 8th, as I and Kleinboy watched the under water about midnight, we heard a black rhinoceros blowing beside the upper water. We very rashly walked up within about eighteen yards of him, with no other shelter than a small bush. On perceiving us the *borèlé* at once turned his head to me and advanced slowly : Kleinboy, who was on my right and had a good chance, fortunately fired without orders, and the ball entered the shoulder with a fine direction. *Borèlé* then charged madly and furiously, through trees and bushes, right towards camp, making the most tremendous blowing noise, and halting in a stony open flat close to the wag-gons : he stood, and staggered about for a minute or two, and then fell. On coming up to him I found him a magnificent specimen, carrying three distinct horns.

After breakfast on the 10th, the oxen having drunk, we inspanned and marched to *Boötlonamy*, which we reached at sunset.

After a march of three days, during which the cattle

and horses nearly died of thirst, we reached Moselakose, a retired fountain in a bold glen, or gorge, in the first mountain chain before us. As we approached this fine fountain, the poor, thirsty, loose cattle rushed ahead to the water, not a little gratified by the sight.

I found the spoor of game abundant at the water ; accordingly I outspanned at a considerable distance from it, and at once set about making a hole from which to shoot the game as they came up to drink.

After breakfast on the 16th I rode to the water and again lay in my hole. There were large herds of game standing within a few hundred yards of me when I lay down, and soon after the horses had disappeared they came on from all sides and completely surrounded me. It was of no consequence that they got my wind, and frequent alarms were sounded—the thirsty game to windward would not heed the alarm, and, standing their ground fearlessly, they gave the others confidence. There were standing within shot of me at once about three hundred pallahs, about twelve sassaybys, and twenty zebras. I could only make out two very fair heads in all that vast herd of pallahs, and these were not to be compared with my best Soobie heads ; I, therefore, amused myself by watching the game, and did not fire, having resolved to wait quietly, in the hope of some rarer game appearing, such as koodoo, sable antelope, or wild boar, &c. At length I observed three shy, strange-looking antelopes approach

the water, with large bushy tails and furry-looking reddish-grey hair. They were three rhooze-rheeboks, a buck and two does. I had never before heard that either of the rheeboks frequented these parts; being anxious to certify that this antelope did so, I shot the buck through the heart.

The next day I again rode to the water and lay down, with large herds of pallahs, &c., in view: soon after the horses were gone they came in and surrounded me, the same as the day before. It was a fine show of game: there were about two hundred pallahs, about fifty blue wildebeests, thirty zebras, and thirty sassaybys—all at once drinking and standing within easy shot of me. After watching them for a short time I selected a fine old cow blue wildebeest, and fired, when this vast body of game thundered, panic-stricken, away on every side. As the dust cleared away the gnoo was to be seen standing alone, and in about ten minutes she staggered, fell, and died. Fifteen minutes afterwards two herds of pallahs approached from different directions. I was overhauling them, when up came two tearing wild boars and stood broadside before me, with their long tails stuck right up. I took the best behind the shoulder; he ran off with his comrade up a very rocky hill above the fountain, leaving the stones red in his wake, and, feeling himself unable to proceed farther, he charged and staggered violently about the stones, and, at last, gave in, having broken both his under-teeth;

he also squealed violently when the struggles of death came over him.

A singular circumstance occurred as I watched the waters on the 20th. Having shot a sassayby, he immediately commenced choking from the blood, and his body began to swell in a most extraordinary manner; it continued swelling, with the animal still alive, until it literally resembled a fisherman's float, when the sassayby died of suffocation. It was not only his body that swelled in this extraordinary manner, but even his head and legs, down to his knees.

The 21st was a bitter cold morning, with a strong wind from the south-west. I rode to my hole at the fountain before the morning star appeared. Shortly, becoming impatient of lying still, I rose from my hole to examine what game had drunk during the night, and, to my astonishment, I at once discovered the spoor of a mighty bull elephant, which must have drunk there not many hours before. I went in haste to camp, and, having made all ready for a three-days' trip, I took up the spoor with two after-riders and six natives. It led us in an easterly course—first, through a neck in the mountains, and then skirting them for about five miles through thick cover and over hard adamantine rocks and sharp stones. The elephant had fed as he went along, and we soon came up with him standing in a thicket. When we first caught sight of him he was within twenty

yards of us, a bushy tree nearly concealing him from our view. I first observed one of his tusks, and then I had to despatch Kleinboy to catch the cowardly natives, who were making off at top speed with my dogs on strings. The dogs fought well with him: it was very rocky ground, and I gave him one deadly shot before he was aware of our presence. I then hunted him into softer ground and slew him with the tenth shot.

This fellow made up my fiftieth elephant bagged in Africa; not to mention numbers lost.

On our way to camp, while following an old established elephant and rhinoceros footpath, I observed a grey mass beneath a bush, with something which looked like a shining black horn stuck out on one side; it was within about eighteen yards of our path. When I got alongside of it I saw that it was a princely old bull buffalo, with a very remarkably fine head. He had lain his head flat on the ground and was crouching, in the hope that we should ride past without observing him, just as an old stag or a roebuck does in Scotland. I gave the dogs the signal of the presence of game, when, as dogs invariably will do, they dashed off in the wrong direction. The buffalo sprang to his feet, and in one instant he was lost in the thicket.

From the quantity of buffalo's spoor on the north side of this mountain range, I made up my mind that there must be some strong water on that side of the hills, as

only one or two buffaloes occasionally came to drink at the fountain where I was encamped; the natives all declared that there was none. I, however, on the 22nd, determined to ride thither to explore, and accordingly started with Kleinboy and the Bushman. We held first about west, and then crossed the mountains by a succession of very rocky valleys and ravines. When we had gained the highest part of the rock, which opened to us the forests to the north, a troop of seven doe koodoos and three rhooze-rheeboks started on the opposite side of the ravine. The dogs, observing the koodoos, gave immediate chase; and after a very fine and bold course they brought one to bay far in the valley below, which Kleinboy shot.

I had, in the mean time, ridden ahead, following an old established game footpath, and after proceeding two or three miles I had the satisfaction to discover a beautiful fountain in a deep rocky ravine on the north side of the mountains. Here was fresh spoor of black and white rhinoceros, buffalo, wildebeest, sassayby, koodoo, klip-springer, &c. A little after this I was met by my after-riders, who had likewise discovered a ravine containing water a little to the east. There they had started two bull buffaloes, three buck koodoos, and a troop of rheebok. I then rode to inspect this water, and took up the spoor of the buffaloes, in the hope of bringing them to bay with the dogs. I held up the hollow on their spoor,

and presently observed one of them standing among some trees to my left. The dogs were snuffing about close under his nose ; nevertheless they failed to observe him, but set off at top speed on some other scent ; nor did they return for about ten minutes. The buffalo did not seem startled by the dogs, but walked slowly over the rocky ridge. I was following briskly after him, when I observed his comrade lying right in our path ; we squatted instantly, but he got our wind and was off. I followed, and got a shot across the ravine, wounding him behind the shoulder. When the dogs came up I tried to put them on this spoor, but they dashed up the ravine and started three other buffaloes, which they failed in bringing to bay, nor did I again see the dogs till I had been two hours in camp. I nearly killed myself by running after them, for I was on foot, the ground being too bad for the horses.

On reaching the steeds I rode hard for camp, as the day was far spent. Passing the mouth of another bold ravine, we crossed very well-beaten paths, which led me to suspect that this ravine also contained a fountain. We had ridden about half-way to camp when a fine old bull eland came charging up to leeward, having got our wind. I sprang from the back of Mazeppa, and gave him both barrels as he passed me. We then gave him chase through very thick cover, and after a sharp burst of about a mile I shot him from the saddle : he carried a very fine

head, and was, notwithstanding the lateness of the season, in very good condition.

On the 23rd, in the forenoon, I rode to explore the suspected ravine of the day before, and having crossed the mountain chain I came upon the fresh spoor of a very large troop of cow elephants leading towards the spot. I at once determined to follow it, and despatched the Bushman to camp for the dogs and Kleinboy's gun, &c. I rode slowly ahead on the spoor, imagining the elephants at a great distance, when, on gaining a ridge, I came full upon the troop drawn up within twenty-five yards of me. There were perhaps from twenty-five to thirty of them. The instant I came upon them they got my wind, and, rumbling, away they went in three divisions into the impenetrable cover.

The ground that I had now reached was one solid mass of sharp adamantine blocks of rock, so that a horse could with difficulty walk on it. I held along the ridge above the cover, and in half a minute I heard one division of the elephants crashing through the cover after me. They came on a little above me, and another troop held the same course a little before me, so that I had considerable difficulty in getting clear of them, and when I did I held for the level ground beneath the dense cover. Here I fell in with one elephant with a calf: she had only one tooth. I gave her a shot after the shoulder; and next minute, while trying to head her in the dense

cover, she very nearly ran me down in her charge. I of course lost her immediately, being without dogs.

I then gave up the elephants in vexation with the ground, and rode to explore the ravine. My wounded elephant, however, happened to take the same course above me in the cover, and I once more fell in with her. She was going slowly along the hill-sides, keeping in the thickest cover, with a rocky ground, where my horse would be of no service to me. I might now have got her, but as she had only one tooth I was not anxious about her, so I held up the bold ravine.

Here, as I expected, I found a strong fountain in a solid rocky basin not more than ten feet wide: it was a very interesting spot, approachable by three different rugged passes, the sides of which were furrowed by broad footpaths established there through ages. The large stones and masses of rock were either kicked to the side or packed into a level "like a pavement;" even the solid adamantine rock was worn hollow by the feet of the mighty game which most probably for a thousand years had passed over it. Here I found fresh spoor of most of the larger game, and, resolving to play havock by light of the coming moon, I left the glen and rode for camp.

On the 25th, after breakfast, I started with bedding and provisions to hunt for a few days on the other side of the hills. We visited the first water and established a

place of concealment with rocks and green boughs on the rock. While we were making this bothy a wild boar hove in view, but, observing us, he escaped. We then held on to the farther ravine, and on my way thither I nearly rode down a fine old bastard gemsbok, which got away among the rocks. I repaired an old hiding-hole at this water, building it up with fragments of rock. I then sent the steeds to a proper distance, put out my fire, and lay down to watch for the night.

First came a pallah, closely followed by a wild dog. The pallah escaped, the wild dog presently returned, and observing my retreating men he barked loudly; ten minutes after, about eight wild dogs came up the glen and drank. Night now set in, and the moonlight very faint. Presently an occasional loud displacement of rock and stone announced the approach of large game: it was two old bull buffaloes; they came and drank, and went away without approaching within shot. Soon after fourteen buffaloes came; but before these had finished drinking they got an alarm and charged panic-stricken up the rugged mountain side. They had winded two lions, which came up to the fountain-head, and drank within eighteen yards of me, where they lay lapping loudly and occasionally halting for four or five minutes, but, from their light colour and the masses of rock that surrounded them, I could not see to fire. About ten minutes after

they had drunk I fancied that they were still lingering, and on throwing a stone their step was heard retreating among the dry leaves and stones.

Soon after this six old bull buffaloes approached from a glen behind us : they walked very slowly, standing long to listen. When the leader came up within twenty yards of us, Kleinboy and I fired together ; it ran thirty yards and in two minutes fell. His comrades, after considering the matter for five minutes, came on once more : we again took the leader, and he also dropped. His comrades, as before, retreated, but soon returning we wounded a third, which we did not get. The moon was now under and it was very dark ; the buffaloes however were determined to try it on once more, and coming up a fourth and last time we shot another old bull. In about ten minutes lions were very busy on the carcase of the first buffalo, where they feasted till morning, taking another drink before they went away. Towards daybreak we wounded a white rhinoceros, and soon after two black rhinoceroses fought beside us, but I was too sleepy to rise.

On the 26th I rose at earliest dawn to inspect the heads of the three old buffaloes ; they were all enormous old bulls, and one of them carried a most splendid head. The lions had cleaned out all his entrails : their spoor was immense. Having taken some buffalo breast and liver for breakfast, I despatched Ruyter to the waggons

to call the natives to remove the carcasses, whilst I and Kleinboy held through the hills to see what game might be in the next glen which contained water. On our way thither we started a fine old buck koodoo, which I shot, putting both barrels into him at one hundred yards. As I was examining the spoor of the game by the fountain I suddenly detected an enormous old rock-snake stealing in beneath a mass of rock beside me. He was truly an enormous snake, and, having never before dealt with this species of game, I did not exactly know how to set about capturing him. Being very anxious to preserve his skin entire, and not wishing to have recourse to my rifle, I cut a stout and tough stick about eight feet long, and having lightened myself of my shooting-belt I commenced the attack. Seizing him by the tail I tried to get him out of his place of refuge ; but I hauled in vain, he only drew his large folds firmer together ; I could not move him. At length I got a rheim round one of his folds about the middle of his body, and Kleinboy and I commenced hauling away in good earnest.

The snake, finding the ground too hot for him, relaxed his coils, and, suddenly bringing round his head to the front, he sprang out at us like an arrow, with his immense and hideous mouth opened to its largest dimensions, and before I could get out of his way he was clean out of his hole, and made a second spring, throwing him-



Drawing a Snake

self forward about eight or ten feet and snapping his horrid fangs within a foot of my naked legs. I sprang out of his way, and getting a hold of the green bough I had cut I returned to the charge. The snake now glided along at top speed: he knew the ground well, and was making for a mass of broken rocks where he would have been beyond my reach, but before he could gain this place of refuge I caught him two or three tremendous whacks on the head. He however held on, and gained a pool of muddy water, which he was rapidly crossing when I again belaboured him, and at length reduced his pace to a stand. We then hanged him by the neck to a bough of a tree, and in about fifteen minutes he seemed dead, but he again became very troublesome during the operation of skinning, twisting his body in all manner of ways. This serpent measured fourteen feet.

At night no game visited the water, being scared by the strong smell of the carrion. Lions however were so numerous that we deemed it safe to shift a position we had taken down the glen, for they trotted past within twenty yards of us, growling fearfully. We fired off the big gun to scare them for the moment while we shifted to our baggage at the fountain-head, where we instantly lighted a large fire. The lions, for a short time after this, kept quiet, when they again returned, and the fire being low they soon commenced upon the buffalo the

natives had left within fifty yards of us, and before morning two of them came up and looked into our bothy, when Boxer giving a sharp bark, and I suddenly awaking and popping up my head, they bounded off.

In the evening of the 28th I shot an old bull koodoo. At night I watched the water near my camp with Klein-boy. After a long time had elapsed an enormous old bull muchocho or white rhinoceros came slowly on, and commenced drinking within fifteen yards of us, and next minute a large herd of zebras and blue wildebeest. It was long before the muchocho would turn his side; when he did, we fired together, and away he went with zebras and wildebeests concealed in a cloud of dust. Next came an old bull borèlé; we fired together, and he made off, blowing loudly, after charging round and round, seeking some object on which to wreak his vengeance. Next came another borèlé, and he got two bullets into his person. The fourth that came was another old bull muchocho; he ran forty yards and fell. And fifth came a cow borèlé; she fell dead to the shots. Three other rhinoceroses came about me, but I was too drowsy to watch any longer, and fell asleep.

These fountains afforded me excellent shooting for about a fortnight longer, during the whole of which time I watched nightly in my different hiding-holes, and bagged buffaloes, rhinoceros, koodoos, zebras, and other

game. One night, while so engaged, a horrid snake which Kleinboy had tried to kill with his loading-rod flew up at my eye, and spat poison into it. Immediately I washed it well out at the fountain. I endured great pain all night, but next day the eye came all right.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Sichely's Kraal again — The Ngotwani — The loose Cattle are lost — Chase and kill a Waterbuck — A portion of the Cattle recovered — A Leopard bayed by my Dogs and slain — Buffalo-shooting beside the Ngotwani — A Lion feeds on the Carcase — My Horse knocked down by the King of Brutes — Meet a grim Lion face to face at midnight! — He sheers off — These Animals unpleasantly bold — An amusing Chase with a Buffalo — Interesting Stalk in rocky ground — Leave my Hunting-ground and encamp on the Vaal River — Great Herds — In taking the Drift a Waggon sticks fast in the middle of the River — Great fear of losing all my Property — Rescue of the Waggon — Colesberg — A Farmer's Waggon capsized in the Fish River — Visit Strydom's farm and find it desolate — Arrival at Grahamstown.

ON the 16th of October we inspanned, and trekked steadily on for Sichely under a most terrific sun, and halted at sundown without water: the country was covered with spoor of all the larger varieties of game, including elephants.

On the 17th I inspanned, and trekked a couple of miles, when I found myself once more on the banks of the Ngotwani, which, except at its source, was this year generally dried up; we however found a spot in its gravelly bed where, by digging, we obtained sufficient water

for all. The natives in charge of the loose cattle chose to remain behind all night, I having too well supplied them with flesh. Though my remaining stud of six horses and twelve trek-oxen were thus absent all night, I was not anxious about them, trusting to the usual good herding of the natives. When, however, they came up after breakfast, they were minus all the loose oxen, without being able to give any account of them, further than that they imagined that they were with us: I accordingly despatched two of my men on horseback to take up their spoor.

On the 18th I arose before it was clear, and rode up the banks of the river with my dogs to seek for waterbuck, and presently arrived where another considerable river's bed joins the Ngotwani. Near this spot I came upon an old waterbuck, the first I had ever seen. He was standing among some young thorn-trees, within sixty yards, and had his eye full upon me. Before I could pull up my horse he was off at a rapid pace, and crossed the river's bed above me. I shouted to the dogs, and fired a shot to encourage them; they had a pretty fair start, and in half a minute the buck disappeared over a rocky ridge, with three or four of my best dogs within thirty yards of his stern. I knew that he would make for the nearest water; accordingly I kept my eye down the river, and listened with an attentive ear for the baying of the dogs. Presently the noble

buck appeared ascending a rocky pyramidal hill down the river side, with the agility of a chamois, and only one dog, Boxer, my best, at his heels. I then galloped down the river side at top speed to meet him, but was too late: I however fired a long shot to encourage Boxer. Next moment, in ascending the opposite bank of the Ngotwani, my horse fell and rolled down the bank very nearly on the top of me. One of the barrels of my favourite ball gun was thereby stove, by coming in violent contact with a piece of rock. Jock, on gaining his legs, declined being caught, and made off for camp, followed by my after-rider: Alert at this moment came up to me, having eight or ten inches of the skin of his breast and forearm ripped clean up by the waterbuck. I now fancied that I had lost him, but a little after I heard Boxer's voice coming down the river side with the buck, having once more turned him. I ran up the bank of the Ngotwani at my best pace to meet them, and found the waterbuck at bay in a deep pool of water, surrounded by high banks of granite rock. He would not stand at bay, but swam through the deep water and broke bay on the opposite side. Boxer, however, held on and followed him up the river, and once more turned him to this pool. I met them coming down the watercourse, and sent a ball into the buck's throat, which made blood flow freely from his mouth. He held stoutly on, however, and plunged into the deep pool, there standing at bay under a granite

rock. I then headed him, and from above put a bullet between his two shoulder-blades, which dropped him dead on the spot. He died as a waterbuck ought, in the deep water. My success with this noble and very beautiful antelope gave me most sincere pleasure.

I had now shot noble specimens of every sort of game in South Africa, excepting a few small bucks common in the colony, and the hippopotamus. Having contemplated the waterbuck for some time, I cut off his handsome head, which I bore to camp in triumph. The next day I succeeded in bringing down another fine waterbuck after a hot chase.

On the 19th Kleinboy returned without the lost oxen : the natives said that they had been found by Bakalalari, and were driven to Sichely. Next day the half of them were sent by the chief, with a message that no more had been found, but that spoor had been seen.

On the morning of the 22nd I rode into camp, after unsuccessfully following the spoor of a herd of elephants for two days in a westerly course. Having partaken of some refreshment, I saddled up two steeds and rode down the bank of Ngotwani with the Bushman, to seek for any game I might find. After riding about a mile along the river's green bank I came suddenly upon an old male leopard, lying under the shade of a thorn grove, and panting from the great heat. Although I was within sixty yards of him he had not heard the horses' tread. I

thought he was a lioness, and, dismounting, took a rest in my saddle on the old grey, and sent a bullet into him. He sprang to his feet and ran half way down the river's bank and stood to look about him, when I sent a second bullet into his person, and he disappeared over the bank. The ground being very dangerous, I did not disturb him by following then, but I at once sent Ruyter back to camp for the dogs. Presently he returned with Wolf and Boxer, very much done up with the sun. I rode forward, and on looking over the bank the leopard started up and sneaked off alongside of the tall reeds and was instantly out of sight. I fired a random shot from the saddle to encourage the dogs, and shouted to them; they however stood looking stupidly round and would not take up his scent at all. I led them over his spoor again and again, but to no purpose; the dogs seemed quite stupid, and yet they were Wolf and Boxer, my two best.

At length I gave it up as a lost affair, and was riding down the river's bank when I heard Wolf give tongue behind me, and, galloping back, I found him at bay with the leopard, immediately beneath where I had fired at him: he was very severely wounded, and had slipped down into the river's bed and doubled back, whereby he had thrown out both the dogs and myself. As I approached he flew out upon Wolf and knocked him over, and then, running up the bed of the river, he took shelter in a thick bush: Wolf, however, followed him, and at

this moment my other dogs came up, having heard the shot, and bayed him fiercely. He sprang out upon them and then crossed the river's bed, taking shelter beneath some large tangled roots on the opposite bank. As he crossed the river I put a third bullet into him, firing from the saddle, and as soon as he came to bay I gave him a fourth, which finished him. This leopard was a very fine old male: in the conflict the unfortunate Alert was wounded, as usual, getting his face torn open; he was still going on three legs, with all his breast laid bare by the first waterbuck.

In the evening I directed my Hottentots to watch a fine pool in the river, and do their best while I rode to a distant pool several miles up the Ngotwani, reported as very good for game, to lie all night and watch: my Totties, however, fearing "Tao," disobeyed me. On reaching the water I was bound for, I found it very promising, and, having fastened my two horses to a tree beneath the river's bank, I prepared a place of concealment close by and lay down for the night.

The river's banks on each side were clad with groves of shady thorn-trees. After I had lain some time, squadrons of buffaloes were heard coming on, until the shady grove on the east bank of the water immediately above me was alive with them. After some time the leaders ventured down the river's bank to drink, and this was the signal for a general rush into the large pool of

water: they came on like a regiment of cavalry at a gallop, making a mighty din and obscuring the air with a dense cloud of dust. At length I sent a ball into one of them, when the most tremendous rush followed up the bank, where they all stood still, listening attentively. I knew that the buffalo was severely wounded, but I did not hear him fall. Some time after I fired at a second, as they stood on the bank above me; this buffalo was also hard hit, but did not then fall. A little after I fired at a third on the same spot; he ran forty yards, and falling groaned fearfully: this at once brought on a number of the others to butt their dying comrade, according to their benevolent custom. I then crept in towards them, and, firing my fourth shot, a second buffalo ran forward a few yards, and falling groaned as the last; her comrades, coming up, served her in the same manner. A second time I crept in, and, firing a fifth shot, a third buffalo ran forward and fell close to her dying comrades: in a few minutes all the other buffaloes made off, and the sound of teeth tearing at the flesh was heard immediately.

I fancied it was the hyænas, and fired a shot to scare them from the flesh. All was still; and, being anxious to inspect the heads of the buffaloes, I went boldly forward, taking the native who accompanied me along with me. We were within about five yards of the nearest buffalo, when I observed a yellow mass lying alongside of him, and at the same instant a lion gave a deep growl.

I thought it was all over with me. The native shouted "Tao," and, springing away, instantly commenced blowing shrilly through a charmed piece of bone which he wore on his necklace. I retreated to the native; and we then knelt down. The lion continued his meal, tearing away at the buffalo, and growling at his wife and family, whom I found next day by the spoor had accompanied him. Knowing that he would not molest me if I left him alone, I proposed to the native to go to our hole and lie down, but he would not hear of it, and entreated me to fire at the lion. I fired three different shots where I thought I saw him, but without any effect; he would not so much as for a moment cease munching my buffalo. I then proceeded to lie down, and was soon asleep, the native keeping watch over our destinies. Some time after midnight other lions were heard coming on from other airts, and my old friend commenced roaring so loudly that the native thought it proper to awake me.

The first old lion now wanted to drink, and held right away for the two unfortunate steeds, roaring terribly. I felt rather alarmed for their safety; but, trusting that the lion had had flesh enough for one night, I lay still, and listened with an attentive ear. In a few minutes, to my utter horror, I heard him spring upon one of the steeds with an angry growl, and dash him to the earth; the steed gave a slight groan, and all was still. I listened to

hear the sound of teeth, but all continued still. Soon after this "Tao" was once more to be heard munching the buffalo. In a few minutes he came forward, and stood on the bank close above us, and roared most terribly, walking up and down, as if meditating some mischief. I now thought it high time to make a fire, and, quickly collecting some dry reeds and little sticks, in half a minute we had a cheerful blaze. The lion, which had not yet got our wind, came forward at once, to find out what the deuce was up; but, not seeing to his entire satisfaction from the top of the bank, he was proceeding to descend by a game-path into the river-bed within a few yards of us. I happened at the very moment to go to this spot to fetch more wood, and, being entirely concealed from the lion's view above by the intervening high reeds, we actually met face to face!

The first notice I got was his sudden spring to one side, accompanied by repeated angry growls, whilst I involuntarily made a convulsive spring backwards, at the same time giving a fearful shriek, such as I never before remember uttering. I fancied just as he growled that he was coming upon me. We now heaped on more wood, and kept up a very strong fire until the day dawned, the lions feasting beside us all the time, notwithstanding the remonstrances of the little native, who, with a true Bechuana spirit, lamenting the loss of so much good flesh, kept continually shouting and pelting them with flaming brands.

The next morning, when it was clear, I arose and inspected the buffaloes. The three that had fallen were fine old cows, and two of them were partly consumed by the lions. The ground all around was packed flat with their spoor; one particular spoor was nearly as large as that of a borèlé. I then proceeded to inspect the steeds: the sand around them was also covered with the lion's spoor. He had sprung upon the Old Grey, but had done him no further injury than scratching his back through the skin: perhaps the lion had been scared by the rheims, or, on discovering his spare condition, had preferred the buffalo.

On the 24th we marched at dawn of day, and held up the Ngotwani, halting at the fine large pool of water where I had shot the three cow buffaloes two nights previously. I had left Ruyter and some natives to look after my flesh, and these reported lions to have surrounded them all night, coming boldly up within a few yards of them, and only retreating when burning brands were sent flying at their heads.

The 26th was a cool cloudy morning, and looked like much rain. I was in the saddle long before the sun rose, and rode down the river to seek waterbuck, accompanied by all my dogs. I had not ridden far when the dogs dashed up the wind, and started a large herd of cow buffaloes, to which I gave chase. They led me a long gallop right round camp, and ended by taking down wind up the Ngotwani, and sought shelter in the thorny

thickets along its banks. Here, as a troop of them charged past me, I dismounted and shot one fine old cow; she brought up in a thicket, but took two more balls before she fell.

The dogs were now coursing up and down the river's bank after an old cow, with her two calves of this and last year. At length all three took into a deep pool some hundred yards long, and swam up and down and from side to side, followed by all the dogs. I wounded the old cow, but would not finish her then, and I next shot the two calves, one of which sank to the bottom, but soon after floated. I then came home to my camp for the natives to draw the flesh. Returning, we found the old cow still there, but standing in deep muddy water. She carried a very fine head, but, unfortunately, a bullet had splintered the point of one of the horns. While we were cutting up the *veal* the old cow came to the side, and got away. I came shortly afterwards, however, upon a very fine old cow buffalo, newly killed by a lion, and was astonished to find that it was my friend of the morning, with the splintered horn. The lion, ever prowling about, had detected her, and, after a long chase, had knocked her over. She bore the most fearful marks of his teeth on her throat, and all her back was marked by his terrible claws. I thought that there had been a long chase, as the buffalo was covered with foam from the lion's mouth.

Having inspected the buffalo, I held on up the bank of the river for a couple of miles—banks densely wooded—and I then turned my face for home, having had a good bathe, and been saluted by a crocodile, who popped up his nose close beside me. I rode out a little distance from the river's bank, and presently came upon four waterbucks. The dogs at once gave chase, and broke a buck from the herd, which in one minute was standing at bay in the river, when I galloped up, and, dismounting, I shot him. Soon after this, while skirting some rocky hills bordering on the river, I detected a very fine old waterbuck standing high up on the summit of one of these. I stalked him in true Highland fashion; and when within seventy yards I sent my right ball through his shoulder. The buck bounded over the ridge, and was out of sight in a moment. On gaining the ridge, with my gun at the ready, I came once more within range, when I sent a second bullet through his ribs. While following his bloody spoor I heard groans on the bank a little above me, and, going forward, I found a noble waterbuck lying dying, with the blood streaming from his mouth. When the life was gone I cut off his head, which was borne to camp before my after-rider.

The morning of the 27th was extremely hot, but I nevertheless resolved to pack up and march to Chouaney. Accordingly, after much trouble and management in stowing away all my lumber, we got under way about

11 A.M., and reached Sichely's a little after sundown. On the march one of my waggon's after-wheels rolled off, but, very fortunately, the axletree escaped. I found Mr. Livingstone at his devotions, and he informed me that it was Sunday.

The next day was deliciously cloudy, with some slight showers of rain. In the evening Sichely came down to see me, bringing my four lost oxen, which he had at length made up his mind to restore. Three of Sichely's men engaged to accompany me to the colony, their wages to be three guns and two cows.

I now proceeded slowly by way of Lotlokane, Motito, and Campbellsdorp, and encamped on the Vaal River on the 11th of November. Here I was obliged to wait for several days, owing to the great body of water coming down rendering a passage impossible.

On the 16th, however, the river having subsided, I inspanned my two waggons, and took the drift with my heaviest waggon, drawn by fourteen oxen. I led the team on horseback, and, several Griquas assisting us, we took the drift very high, and got a little more than half-way through when two of the oxen became entangled in the gear, and, being dragged along, my driver foolishly halted the waggon. The result of this foolish management was, that the oxen instantly turned right-about-face, and stood with their heads up water, the stream being too powerful for them to stand still otherwise. We

spent a fruitless hour of very harassing work, trying to right the oxen, which was, however, impossible, and at length we were obliged to cut away the trektow, and get the oxen ashore. Here, after resting them for a little, we inspanned them in the trektow, and, taking them some distance above the isolated waggon, we swam them down, and tried to fix the trektow on the dissel-boom; but in this we failed, the stream carrying away the cattle before they made the waggon. We had then to go ashore and repeat the process. In the next attempt the oxen were brought too near the waggon, and, getting foul of it, we had great difficulty in extricating them. One ox remained there for half an hour before we got him clear, the strong current holding him against the waggon. We next got over the oxen and trektow of the other waggon, and made several attempts with these, but without success.

The day was now waning away, and both men and oxen were very much knocked up. It was most distressing work, and it was greatly aggravated by the cruel, sharp stones which composed the river's bed, and the virulent invisible doublegee-thorns with which the banks were strewed. I began to despair of getting the waggon out that day; and from the appearance of the weather toward the sources of the river for some time past, we had every reason to expect a flood at any moment. It was a dismal prospect, and my heart was ill at ease. Late in

the day we made loose my strong new buffalo trektow, and bent it on to the dissel-boom, and then, bringing in the oxen, we managed to fasten the tow on to this one. I also placed several men on the wheels. This time we very nearly succeeded ; the waggon started and proceeded several yards, when one of the tows gave way, and we were again left in the lurch. Once more we made the attempt, and again failed, the oxen becoming entangled with the gear. The sun was now under, and, all hands being most completely done up, we desisted for the night. My men came off to the waggon with three of my steeds, and I rummaged out some flesh, meal, and coffee, with some sleeping toggery and cooking utensils ; we then left the desolate waggon, with great doubts of ever boarding it again.

I could not help thinking of Robinson Crusoe when he visited for the last time the wreck of his ship. I rested but little that night, and I had good reason to be anxious ; for if the river should come down at all, it would be impossible to do anything with the waggon next day, and I could not expect anything but to see a tearing flood. If this had happened I should have been utterly ruined, for nearly all my worldly property was contained in the waggon. I sent a message to Mr. Hughes, requesting him to assist me in my troubles with men and oxen next day, although it was the sabbath.

I had the gratification to find at daydawn that the river had fallen a little during the night; and I had just finished my breakfast when four Griquas came up, bearing a long stout rope, which Mr. Hughes had forwarded for my use. These men informed me that he had sent men out in different directions to seek for three spans of his oxen to be brought to my assistance. We then set about getting the gear in order, and very soon two spans of the oxen appeared with another party of Griquas. We next made fast one end of the rope to the dissel-boom, and to the other end of this rope we fastened the large buffalo trektow, which reached slanting across the strong current to shallower water where the oxen could stand. We then brought in two span of oxen, and fastened the end of their tow on the buffalo, and put the oxen in motion. They laid a mighty strain on the long tow, and the waggon moved slightly, when a strong rheim, that with many turns fastened two of the trektows, gave way, and left me once more in trouble.

The river had at this moment increased about six inches, and was now stronger than on the preceding day; moreover it was still increasing. This put me at once in great consternation; my hopes, which a little before were very high, now sank, and I expected in a few hours perhaps to see my waggon overwhelmed and swept away. This, however, was not the case; the river did not increase much more, and in our second attempt we were successful.

The trektows were on this occasion knotted together, the oxen all trekked fair and together, and the heavily-laden waggon, with its precious contents, was rescued from a watery grave. We hailed its rescue with continued cheers: the oxen held stoutly on, and dragged the waggon without a check right out to the shallow water on the border of the river. We then shortened the gear, and, having inspanned two after-bullocks, we drove the waggon right out of the river's bed and outspanned on the top of the high bank.

The next move was to get the other waggons through. The Griquas at first made some demur, saying that it was Sunday; but I very soon got rid of that objection, by telling them that I would prepare some food and coffee for them, when they set to work with a good will, and in two hours more the other three waggons were brought safely through, and were high and dry.

On the 8th we entered the village of Colesberg. All the forenoon I was busy off-loading two of the waggons. We spread out the curiosities in the market-ground, making no end of a parade: it was truly a very remarkable sight, and struck all beholders with astonishment.

On the 13th I left Colesberg, and set out on my way to Grahamstown; passing on the 17th the Thebus flats. On the march I saddled up, and, leaving the waggons, I rode across country for Hendrick Strydom's farm, where I had commenced my sporting career in South

Africa. As I rode across the flats I found springbok and black wildebeest still abundant. On reaching the residence of my former friend, I found the blackness of desolation pictured there. The house was falling to pieces, and the grass grew rank where the pot was wont to boil. In a melancholy mood I then turned my face for the farm where I had ordered my waggons to halt ; and, as I rode along, I mused on the fleeting and transient nature of all human condition. On the 25th I reached Fort Beaufort, where I dined with some old acquaintances at the mess of the 7th.

On the 29th we marched to the Fish River at dawn of day. Here I found about sixty waggons waiting the falling of the river to get through. Some of us set to work to clear away a bank of mud on the opposite side, after which a good many waggons, lightly laden, crossed the river ; but on attempting to bring through my large waggon, she stuck fast, and was at length extricated with the help of another span. We saved her just in time, for the river was increasing fast when we got her out, and in another half-hour was running a rapid torrent, at least ten feet deep. I found several very jolly farmers, English and Scotch, lying on the opposite side ; in particular, one Annesley, of whom I had heard a great deal. This man was a regular "brick," a thorough Scotsman from the borders. He came up to me at once, and asked me to come and have a glass of whisky with

him : he was accompanied by his family ; his eldest daughter was a very fine girl.

By the 1st of February the river had fallen most rapidly. After some work in clearing away the mud on both sides, waggons began to cross, and a great rumpus was kept up during the remainder of the day. I got my second waggon through about eleven A.M. Soon after I had got through good old Annesley took the drift, and on approaching the opposite side his waggon had the most fearful capsize in deep water, seriously damaging a quantity of very valuable property. In an instant we were all at his assistance, and in a very short time we got out his wife and family and damaged cargo and righted his waggon for him. I brought him over dry clothes, and spent about three hours in assisting him in his difficulty. I then inspanned and trekked on to Boatasberg, where I halted about midnight, with good moonlight.

On the 2nd I marched into Grahamstown, where I sold my ivory well, the ivory and ostrich-feathers realising in the market somewhere about 1000*l*.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Start on another Elephant-shooting Expedition — The Hart River — Numerous pack of Wild Dogs — Mahura, Chief of the Batlapis — Rumours of Wars — The Meritsane — Lotlokane — Encounter with two Lions on the Molopo — Chouaney — A tremendous Fight with a Buffalo — The River Limpopo — Huge Crocodiles — A splendid Hippopotamus falls to my Rifle — Immense Herds of Buffaloes crossing the River — The Serolomootlooque Antelope unknown to Naturalists — A herd of Hippopotami — Fine Sport beside the River.

I REMAINED in Grahamstown for some weeks, being undecided as to my future plans. At last, however, I decided upon making another elephant-shooting expedition. I accordingly started for the far interior on the 11th of March, and, having resolved to try a short cut through the territories of the chief Mahura, I crossed the Vaal river on the 5th of May, far to the eastward of my former track.

Early on the 7th we entered upon the broad strath through which the Hart River flows. Here we discovered a small fountain, where we halted for the night. We marched early on the 8th, holding up the strath parallel with the Hart River. Presently we came upon the largest pack of wild dogs I had ever seen: there were

about forty of them. They went off very leisurely, and when my dogs chased them they turned about and showed fight. We were in motion most of the day; very large herds of cattle were to be seen pasturing on all sides.

On the 12th we marched before breakfast to within three miles of Mahura. Having taken breakfast, I rode ahead with Ruyter, and called on Mr. Ross, the resident missionary. We walked together to the town and visited Mahura and his brother; the expressions of neither of these men were at all in their favour. I told Mahura that I wanted an ox with very large horns, which he promised to provide. He asked me if we were still at war with the Tambookie tribes. He also mentioned that ten men of the Bastards had been shot by Mochesse's natives. Mr. Ross informed me that Mahura was at present meditating war upon a tribe to the north-east, and also that Mochuarra, the chief at Motito, meditated an attack upon Sichely. In the evening my waggons came up, when I directed them to draw up in a grove of cameel-dorn about a mile beyond the town.

The next day Mahura sent a party of men to inquire who had given me permission to outspan where I now stood, and ordering me to inspan and return to the town. These men were very insolent and overbearing in their manner. I accordingly at once assumed a very high tone, and said that, if Mahura was particular as to where

I outspanned, he ought to have told me so on the preceding evening ; that as to returning, I would on no account return ; and that if the chief's heart was against me I would not wait to trade with him, but would at once proceed on my journey. I also told them that Mahura was not my chief, and that I cared not for his words. They then became still more insolent, and said that I should learn what Mahura could do before sunset, and they departed to report my words to their tyrannical chief.

Mahura was sitting in the missionary's house : accordingly I rode thither and arrived along with these men. On my words being reported, he was at first exceedingly wroth, and said that in consequence of what I had said he would not permit me to proceed through his country. I only smiled at these threats ; and he eventually cooled down, and took leave of us apparently in good humour. In the evening he returned and took tea with Mr. Ross and myself, and then accompanied me to my camp ; he rode on horseback in a large white great-coat, accompanied by his brother and two other mounted attendants. I showed him all my rifles, with which he expressed himself much pleased : having drunk his fill of coffee, he took a friendly leave, promising to visit me early next day.

True to his word, Mahura came and breakfasted with me, after which I obtained six karosses from him in barter

for ammunition. I then presented him with a whipstick and two pounds of powder, and walked down to the missionary's house, ordering my men to inspan. Mahura promised to come thither and take leave of me, but did not keep his word. About midday I marched, holding a spoor of three waggons some months old, said to lead me into my old course at Great Chooi.

On the 20th we reached the bank of the Meritsane, two miles below my old spoor. On the march we saw for the first time spoor of the black rhinoceros, also pallah and koodoo on the mountain, and hartebeests on the open country.

On the 22nd we marched at early dawn, and, having proceeded about four miles, left the main road to Bakatla, and held across-country to our right for my old outspanning-place at Lotlokane; two hours more brought us thither. I did not find the vast herds of game congregated here as usual, water being everywhere abundant: the grass over the whole country was remarkable, being much higher than my oxen.

On the 23rd, when within two miles of the Molopo, the dogs took up the scent of lions. I then halted my waggons, and, having saddled up two horses, I rode with Ruyter in quest of them, accompanied by ten of my dogs, who kept the scent for a short distance, and at last lost it altogether, and went off on the scent of some hartebeests. I now rode forward to the Molopo, which I

made about one mile lower down than the drift. This darling little river is here completely concealed by lofty reeds and long grass which densely clothe its margin to a distance of at least a hundred yards. On each side rietbuck were very abundant. On making the river we started one of these. I rode up the river side, and immediately observed two old lions come slowly out from the adjoining cover and slant off toward the reeds. I galloped forward to endeavour to get between them and the reeds; in this I succeeded. The lions, imagining that we were some species of game, did not attempt to retreat, but stood looking in wonder until I was within fifty yards of them, and right between the last lion and the reeds. I was struck with wonder and admiration at the majestic and truly awful appearance which these two noble old lions presented.

They were both very large; the first, a "schwart fore-life," or black-maned lion,—the last, which was the finest and the oldest, a "chiell fore-life," or yellow-maned lion. The black-maned lion, after looking at me for half a minute, walked slowly forward and bounded into the reeds; the dark-brown lion would fain have done the same, but I was now right between him and his retreat. He seemed not at all to like my appearance, but he did not yet feel certain what I was, and, fancying that I had not observed him, he lay down in the long grass. Ruyter now came up with my rifle. Having loaded in the saddle,

I waited a minute for all my dogs to come up, they having gone off after the reitbuck, and I then rode slowly forward towards the lion as if to pass within twenty-five yards of him. Not one of the dogs was yet aware of the lion, and they came on behind my horse.

This move on my part lost me the lion, for by so doing I laid open the ground of retreat between him and the reeds; and on coming within twenty or twenty-five yards of him, and whilst in the act of reining in my horse to fire, he took his eye off me, examined the ground between him and the reeds, and, seeing the coast clear, he suddenly bounded forward, and, before I could even dismount from my panic-stricken steed, was at the edge of the reeds, which he entered with a lofty spring, making the water fly as he pitched into it. Several of the dogs entered after him, but immediately retreated, barking over their shoulders in great fear. Thus I lost this most noble lion, which, with better management, I might easily have slain. I ought to have approached him on foot, leading my steed, and I ought not to have laid open the ground of retreat.

On the 27th we trekked to Chouaney, which we reached at sundown, and remained there to trade next day. I obtained from Sichely two natives to accompany me to the Limpopo, their pay being a musket each. I got also from the chief twelve elephants' teeth, several very fine karosses, native arms, and other curiosities.

About midday we marched, and slept near the Ngotwani, along whose banks my course lay for the Limpopo. The country through which the Ngotwani twines is soft and sandy, and in general covered with dense thorny jungle which greatly impeded our progress, having constantly to cut a passage before the waggons could advance. Several lions commenced roaring around us soon after the sun went down.

On the evening of the next day I had a glorious row with an old bull buffalo: he was the only large bull in a fine herd of cows. I found their spoor while walking ahead of the waggons, and, following it up, I came upon a part of the herd feeding quietly in a dense part of the forest. I fired my first shot at a cow, which I wounded. The other half of the herd then came up right in my face, within six yards of me. They would have trampled on me if I had not sung out in their faces and turned them. I selected the old bull and sent a bullet into his shoulder. The herd then crashed along through the jungle to my right, but he at once broke away from them and took to my left. On examining his spoor, I found it bloody. I then went to meet my waggons, which I heard coming on, and, ordering the men to outspan, I took all my dogs to the spoor. They ran it up in fine style, and in a few minutes the silence of the forest was disturbed by a tremendous bay. On running towards the sound I met the old fellow coming on towards the waggons, with all my dogs

after him. I saluted him with a second ball in the shoulder; he held on and took up a position in the thicket within forty yards of the waggons, where I finished him. He carried a most splendid head.

On the 8th of June we made the long wished-for fair Limpopo an hour before sunset. I was at once struck with this most interesting river: the trees along its banks were of prodigious size and very great beauty. At the very spot where I made the water, a huge crocodile lay upon the sand on the opposite side; on observing me he dashed into the stream.

The next day I rode ahead of the waggons with Ruyter, and hunted along the bank of the river. I immediately shot a waterbuck. This animal and pallah were very abundant. As I advanced I found large vleys along the river side, a favourite haunt of the waterbuck. After breakfast I again rode forth with fresh horses with my Bushman. We still found waterbuck and pallah very abundant. I presently gave chase to a herd of the former to try their speed; but as they led me into the midst of a labyrinth of marshy vleys, I gave it up.

At that instant the Bushman whispered "Sir, Sir;" and looking to my right, two princely old bull buffaloes stood in the jungle within forty yards of me. They got my wind, and started before I could get ready to fire. They held along the river-bank ahead of me, but not requiring them I did not give chase. After this I came

upon a huge crocodile basking on the sand, which instantly dashed into the stream. I now got into a vast labyrinth of marshes of great extent. Several species of wild duck and a variety of water-fowl were extremely abundant and very tame, hundreds passing before my eye at once; guinea-fowl, three sorts of large partridge, and two kinds of quail being likewise numerous.

I presently wounded a noble old waterbuck as he dashed past me in marshy ground. In following him up I met an old buck pallah, which I shot dead on the spot with a shot in the middle of the breast. Following on after the wounded waterbuck, along the high bank of the river, which was, however, concealed from my view by the dense cover, I suddenly heard a loud splash, and, coming suddenly clear of the cover, I beheld the lovely waterbuck standing broadside on an island in the middle of the river. Before I could dismount to fire, he dashed into the water and swam to the opposite bank. I grasped my trusty little Moore and waited till he won the *terra firma*, when with one well-directed shot I dropped him on the spot. A very strange thing then occurred; the buck in his death-pangs slid down into the river, and continuing his struggles he swam half-way across the river back to the island, where he lay upon a sand-bank. I then divested myself of my leathers, spurs, and veldt-schoens, and was wading in to fetch him, when the river carried him off, and, fearing the horrible

crocodiles, I did not attempt to follow. It was now late, and I rode for my waggon-spoor, which I failed to find until I had returned to where we had that morning breakfasted. I had been following the turns of the river, and the waggons had taken a short cut across the country. I reached them in the dark by great good luck.

On the 10th I rode ahead of my waggons at day-dawn: thick mist was rolling along the Limpopo. Presently I saw two crocodiles in the stream below me. A little after I had the pleasure to find, for the first time, the spoor of sea-cows or hippopotami. I had never before seen it, but I knew it must be theirs; it was very similar to the spoor of borele, or black rhinoceros, but larger, and had four toes instead of three. Before returning to my waggons I tried to ride down a water-buck which I turned off from the river, but in this I failed, though I managed to keep close to him in the chase, and eventually to knock him up along with my horse.

I again sallied forth with the Bushman and fresh steeds, and, directing the waggons to take the straight course, I followed the windings of the river. Presently, looking over the bank, I beheld three enormous crocodiles basking on the sand on the opposite side. I was astonished at their awful appearance and size, one of them appearing to me to be sixteen or eighteen feet in length, with a body as thick as that of an ox. On ob-

serving us they plunged into the dead water by the side of the stream. The next minute, one of them popping up his terrible head in the middle of the stream, I made a beautiful shot, and sent a ball through the middle of his brains. The convulsions of death which followed were truly awful. At first he sank for an instant to the shot, but instantly striking the bottom with his tail he shot up above the water, when he struggled violently, sometimes on his back and then again on his belly, with at one time his head and fore feet above the water, and immediately after his tail and hind legs, the former lashing the water with a force truly astounding. Clouds of sand accompanied him in all his movements, the strong stream carrying him along with it, till at length the struggle of death was over, and he sank to rise no more.

Following the windings of the river I detected a small crocodile basking on the sand, when I gave him a shot and he instantly plunged into the river. A little farther on I wounded a third as he lay on a promontory of sand, and he likewise made the water. A little farther down the stream, yet another crocodile, a huge old sinner, lay basking on the sand. I determined to make a very correct shot in this case, and set about stalking him. Creeping up behind the trunk of a prostrate old tree, I took a rest and sent the ball into his nostril, when he plunged into the river, colouring the water with his blood.

We now got into a fine green turn of the river, where I saw a great many waterbucks. I shot one buck pallah, and immediately after I came suddenly upon a troop of five or six beautiful leopards. At the next bend of the river three huge crocodiles lay on the sand on the opposite side. Stalking within easy range, I shot one of them in the head: his comrades instantly dashed into the water, but he lay as if dead high on the sand. A second shot, however, through the ribs brought him back to life. On receiving it he kept running round and round, snapping his horrid jaws fearfully at his own wounded side. In the convulsions of death he made one run clean away from the water, but another unlucky turn brought his head toward the river, into which he eventually rolled. Galloping along from this place to my waggons, I came suddenly upon a lion and lioness lying in the grass below a gigantic old mimosa. Dismounting from my horse, I took a couple of shots at the lion, missing him with my first, but wounding him with my second shot, when he rose with several angry short growls and bounded off. A few hundred yards farther on I found my waggons drawn up, and on reaching them my men informed that they had just seen two huge hippopotami in the river beneath. Proceeding to the spot, we found them still swimming there. I shot one, putting three balls into his head, when he sank, but night setting in we lost him.

At dawn of day on the 12th a noise was heard for about

twenty minutes up the river, like the sound of the sea, accompanied by the lowing of buffaloes. It was a herd crossing the river. I rode thither to look at them, and was retracing my steps to camp, when, within three hundred yards of my waggons, I beheld an old bull-buffalo standing contemplating my camp, with my followers looking at him in great consternation. They set the dogs after him, when he took away up the river. As the ground was extremely bad for riding, being full of deep holes, and all concealed with long grass, it was some time before I could get away after the dogs; and when I had ridden a short distance I met them all returning, their feet being completely done up with the long march from the colony.

I now turned my face once more for camp, when I heard one of my dogs at bay behind me. Galloping up to the spot, I found my dog "Lion" standing barking at an old waterbuck in an open flat. The buck, on observing me, made away for the river, and, joining a herd of does, they dashed into the stream, and were immediately upon the opposite bank. I was in a sequestered bend of the river, where the banks for several acres were densely clad with lofty reeds and grass which towered above my head as I sat on my horse's back. Beyond the reeds and grass were trees of all sizes, forming a dense shade; this is the general character of the banks of the Limpopo, as far as I have yet seen. I was slowly returning to my

camp, in anything but good humour at my want of success with the game I had just been after, when, behold, an antelope of the most exquisite beauty, and utterly unknown to sportsmen or naturalists, stood broadside in my path, looking me full in the face. It was a princely old buck of the serolomootlooque of the Bakalahari, or bush-buck of the Limpopo. He carried a very fine wide-set pair of horns. On beholding him I was struck with wonder and delight. My heart beat with excitement. I sprang from my saddle, but before I could fire a shot this gem of beauty bounded into the reeds, and was lost to my sight. At that moment I would have given half what I possessed in this world for a broadside at that lovely antelope, and I at once resolved not to proceed farther on my expedition until I had captured him, although it should cost me the labour of a month.

The antelope having entered the reeds, I gave my horse to my after-rider, and with my rifle on full cock and at the ready I proceeded to stalk with extreme caution throughout the length and breadth of the cover; but I stalked in vain; the antelope had vanished, and was nowhere to be found. I then returned to my steed, and rode slowly up the river's bank towards my camp. I had ridden to within a few hundred yards of the waggons, and was meditating how I should best circumvent the serolomootlooque, when once more this lovely antelope crossed my path; I had been unwittingly driving him

before me along the bank of the river. He trotted like a roebuck into the thick cover, and then stood broadside among the thorn bushes. I sprang from my saddle, and, guessing about his position, I fired and missed him ; he then trotted along a rhinoceros's footpath, and gave me a second chance. Again I fired, and before my rifle was down from my shoulder the serolomootlooque lay prostrate in the dust. The ball had cut the skin open along his ribs, and, entering his body, had passed along his neck, and had lodged in his brains, where we found it on preparing the head for stuffing. I was not a little gratified at my good fortune in securing this novel and valuable trophy ; he was one of the most perfect antelopes I had ever beheld, both in symmetry and colour. I had him immediately conveyed to camp, where I took his measurement, and wrote out a correct description of him for the benefit of naturalists. I christened him the "Antelopus Roualeynei," or "bushbuck of the Limpopo."

The next day I breakfasted before the sun rose, and then rode down the river's bank with Ruyter. I first shot an old buck pallah, and having ridden a few miles farther I came upon two fine old waterbucks fighting, when I stalked in within a hundred yards, and shot them both right and left. The heads were fair specimens, but, having many better, I reluctantly left them to perish in the feldt. Hereabouts I found fresh spoor of hippopotami of the preceding night. I followed this spoor to a considerable dis-

tance along the margin of the river, and at last I came upon the troop. They were lying in a shady, sequestered bend of the river, beneath some gigantic shady trees. In this place the water in heavy floods had thrown up large banks of sand, in which they had hollowed out their beds. The spot was surrounded with dense underwood and reeds, and was adjacent to a very deep and broad stream, into which their footpaths led in every direction.

I was first apprized of my proximity to them by a loud cry from one old bull, who took alarm at the sudden flight of a species of heron: his cry was not unlike that of an elephant. He stood in water which reached half way up his side, shaking his short ears in the sun; every half-minute he disappeared beneath the water, when, again parading half of his body, he uttered a loud snorting, blowing noise. On observing him, I dismounted, and every time he disappeared I ran in, until I stood behind the tall reeds within twenty yards of him. Here I might have dropped him with a single ball, but I unfortunately made up my mind not to molest them until next day, when I should have men to assist me to get them out. Presently he observed me, when he dived, and swam round a shady promontory into the deep stream, where he and his comrades kept up a continual loud blowing noise. I returned to camp, and, having ordered my men to inspan, I tried a drift on horseback, and crossed the Limpopo, but, the water coming over my

saddle, I did not attempt to bring through my waggons. We accordingly held on our course on the north-western bank of the river, and outspanned about a mile above the place where I had found the hippopotami.

When the sun went down the sea-cows commenced a march up the river. They passed along opposite to my camp, making the most extraordinary sounds—blowing, snorting, and roaring, sometimes crashing through the reeds, and sometimes swimming gently, and splashing and sporting through the water. There being a little moonlight, I went down with my man Carey, and sat some time on the river's bank contemplating these wonderful monsters of the river. It was a truly grand and very extraordinary scene; the opposite bank of the stream was clad with trees of gigantic size and great beauty, which added greatly to the interest of the picture.

On the 14th, after a very early breakfast, I proceeded with three after-riders, two double-barrelled rifles, and about a hundred rounds of ammunition, to the spot where I had yesterday found the hippopotami; but they had taken alarm, and were all gone. The spoor leading up the river, I rode along the banks, examining every pool until my steed was quite knocked up, but found not a single sea-cow. The spoor still led up the river; they had made short cuts at every bend, sometimes taking the direct line on my side, and sometimes on the other. Finding that I must sleep in the feldt if I followed on, I

despatched Ruyter to camp for my blankets, coffee-kettle, biscuit, &c., and fresh steeds. I searched on foot, and penetrated every thicket and every dense jungle of reeds that overhung the river, until at last, faint with hunger and fatigue, I sought some game on which to make a luncheon, and had the good fortune to fall in with a young doe of the "*Antelopus Roualeynei*," which I shot, and in a few minutes she was roasting on a mighty fire.

Ruyter, at this moment coming up, brought a welcome supply of biscuit and coffee, and reported my yellow horse "*Flux*," about my very best, to have died of horse-sickness. After luncheon I continued my search for hippopotami; and just as the sun went down I started an old fellow from beneath some tall reeds, which hung over a deep broad pool. On hearing me approach he dived with a loud splash, and immediately re-appeared with a blowing noise a little farther up the river, and within twenty yards of the bank. Having looked about him, he again dived, and continued his course up the river, which could be traced from the wave above. I ran in front of him, and when he came up the third time I was standing opposite to him, ready with my rifle at my shoulder. I sent the bullet into his brain, when he floundered for one moment at the surface, and then sank to the bottom. There he most probably only remained for half an hour, but in a few minutes night set in, and I had thus the

extreme mortification to lose my hippopotamus, the second one which I had shot. We slept beneath a shady tree ; at midnight a few drops of rain fell, and I feared a drenching , it, however, passed away. In the course of the day we saw several very large crocodiles, three of which I shot. One of these lay upon an island ; I shot him dead on the spot ; he did not gain the water.



CHAPTER XXV.

We cross the Limpopo — Rash Encounter with a Hippopotamus — Remarkable dome-like Rock — Two Serolomootlooques shot — Hollow Trees containing Honey — Gigantic Ant-hills — Hunting across the Limpopo — Another Boa Constrictor — A Visit from Seleka — A Sea-cow shot, which sinks — Resurrection of the Beast — Splendid Hippopotamus-shooting.

ON the 17th of June, having found a good drift, I crossed the Limpopo with my waggons, and drew them up in a green and shady spot. I then rode a long way down the eastern bank in quest of hippopotami, and late in the evening I found one, which I did not molest, trusting to find him next day.

On the 18th a dense mist hung over the river all the morning. Ordering the waggons to follow in an hour, I rode ahead to seek the sea-cow of the previous night, but after a long search I gave it up as a bad job, and, kindling a fire to warm myself, I awaited the waggons, which presently came up. Here I halted for two hours, and then once more rode ahead to seek hippopotami. The river became more promising for sea-cow. At every turn there occurred deep, still pools, with occasional sandy

islands densely clad with lofty reeds, and with banks covered with reeds to a breadth of thirty yards. Above and beyond these reeds stood trees of immense age and gigantic size, beneath which grew a long and very rank description of grass, on which the sea-cow delights to pasture.

I soon found fresh spoor, and after holding on for several miles, just as the sun was going down, and as I entered a dense reed cover, I came upon the fresh lairs of four hippopotami. They had been lying sleeping on the margin of the river, and, on hearing me come crackling through the reeds, had plunged into the deep water. I at once ascertained that they were newly started, for the froth and bubbles were still on the spot where they had plunged in. Next moment I heard them blowing a little way down the river. I then headed them, and, with considerable difficulty, owing to the cover and the reeds, I at length came right down above where they were standing. It was a broad part of the river, with a sandy bottom, and the water came half-way up their sides. There were four of them, three cows and an old bull; they stood in the middle of the river, and, though alarmed, did not appear aware of the extent of the impending danger.

I took the sea-cow next me, and with my first ball I gave her a mortal wound, knocking loose a great plate on the top of her skull. She at once commenced plung-

ing round and round, and then occasionally remained still, sitting for a few minutes on the same spot. On hearing the report of my rifle two of the others took up stream, and the fourth dashed down the river; they trotted along, like oxen, at a smart pace as long as the water was shallow. I was now in a state of very great anxiety about my wounded sea-cow, for I feared that she would get down into deep water, and be lost like the last one; her struggles were still carrying her down stream, and the water was becoming deeper. To settle the matter I accordingly fired a second shot from the bank, which, entering the roof of her skull, passed out through her eye; she then kept continually splashing round and round in a circle in the middle of the river. I had great fears of the crocodiles, and I did not know that the sea-cow might not attack me. My anxiety to secure her, however, overcame all hesitation; so, divesting myself of my leathers, and armed with a sharp knife, I dashed into the water, which at first took me up to my arm-pits, but in the middle was shallower.

As I approached Behemoth her eye looked very wicked. I halted for a moment, ready to dive under the water if she attacked me, but she was stunned, and did not know what she was doing; so, running in upon her, and seizing her short tail, I attempted to incline her course to land. It was extraordinary what enormous strength she still had in the water. I could not guide her in the slightest, and

she continued to splash, and plunge, and blow, and make her circular course, carrying me along with her as if I was a fly on her tail. Finding her tail gave me but a poor hold, as the only means of securing my prey, I took out my knife, and cutting two deep parallel incisions through the skin on her rump, and lifting this skin from the flesh, so that I could get in my two hands, I made use of this as a handle ; and after some desperate hard work, sometimes pushing and sometimes pulling, the sea-cow continuing her circular course all the time and I holding on at her rump like grim Death, eventually I succeeded in bringing this gigantic and most powerful animal to the bank. Here the Bushman quickly brought me a stout buffalo-rheim from my horse's neck, which I passed through the opening in the thick skin, and moored Behemoth to a tree. I then took my rifle and sent a ball through the centre of her head, and she was numbered with the dead.

At this moment my waggons came up within a few hundred yards of the spot, where I outspanned, and by moonlight we took down a span of select oxen and a pair of rheim chains, and succeeded in dragging the sea-cow high and dry. We were all astonished at her enormous size ; she appeared to be about five feet broad across the belly. I could see much beauty in the animal, which Nature has admirably formed for the amphibious life it was destined to pursue.

We were occupied all the morning of the 19th cutting up and salting the select parts of the sea-cow ; of the skull I took particular charge. She was extremely fat, more resembling a pig than a cow or a horse. In the evening I rode down the river, and shot a brace of waterbucks, after which I left the river-bank and rode to the summit of an adjacent hill, from which I obtained a fine view of the surrounding country. Many bold blue mountain ranges stood to the north and north-west ; to the east and south-east were also mountain-ranges ; whilst to the south a very remarkable light-coloured rock, in the form of a dome, shot high above the level of the surrounding forest.

The next day at dawn I rode down the river-side to seek serolomootlooques, and ordered my waggons to follow in a couple of hours. After riding a few miles, I observed a serolomootlooque of surpassing beauty standing on the top of the opposite bank of the river ; he stood with his breast to me, and from the broad belt of reeds on this side of the water it was impossible to get nearer than a hundred yards of him. Taking a deliberate aim, I fired off-hand, and heard the ball tell upon him. Here the river was deep, requiring swimming, and I had fears of the crocodiles. I sent the Bushman across, however, on horseback, who immediately discovered blood, and presently came upon the buck, and found his fore-arm smashed in the shoulder. I went over, and, starting

the buck in the cover, put a bullet in his ribs. He then got into some thick reeds, when I took up a position on one side, and ordered Ruyter to beat up the cover. The buck broke near me, when I sent a third bullet right through and through his shoulder ; and the tough old buck still scorning to fall, I quickly fired my other barrel, and most unluckily cut his lovely horn off at the base. The buck now charged headlong into a thick bush, and died. His head, before I destroyed it, was perhaps the finest along the banks of the Limpopo ; the horns were of extraordinary length, and had a most perfect set and turn.

We now swam our steeds back to the saddlery, and presently overtook the waggons. I deposited my damaged trophy, and, mounting fresh steeds, rode once more ahead. I was not ten minutes away from the waggons when I started another serolomootlooque, a first-rate old buck, very nearly as good as the last. Imagining our horses were some beasts of the forest, he turned to look at us, when I shot him in the heart. The waggons being close at hand, the buck was deposited in my larder, and I once more rode forth.

After proceeding many miles along the borders of the river, on emerging into an open space running parallel with the stream, I came upon large herds of pallahs, blue wildebeests, zebras, and, to my utter astonishment, a herd of about ten bull elands. I was not aware that they

were met with in these parts. I gave chase, and soon selected the best bull in the herd, a ponderous grey old fellow ; he began at once to trot, though all the rest were still at a gallop. After a sharp ride of a few miles I turned this eland, and brought him back close on the river, when I shot him in the shoulder, holding out my rifle with one hand, like a pistol. I then rode back to seek my waggons, which I failed to find, they not having come on as I had ordered. I fancied that the natives had led them some short cut, and that the river might have a great bend ; so, being faint and hungry, I rode back to the eland, where I had left my Bushman, kindled a fire, and roasted and ate flesh and liver of the eland. As night was coming on, I skinned his side which lay uppermost that I might have some covering, as I had neither coat nor waistcoat. When, however, the sun went down, signal shots disclosed to me the position of the waggons ; they had come on within half a mile of where the eland died.

On the 21st I rode some distance down the river with Ruyter in quest of sea-cow and serolomootlooques ; we found fresh spoor of the former, and I shot one doe of the latter. Ruyter drove her up to me by beating the reeds ; he also started a fine old buck, which did not break cover. As I rode along I saw six crocodiles and a great number of monkeys of two varieties ; also several deadly serpents, one of them a cobra, very similar to the

Indian cobra. Bees were very abundant along the Limpopo, the gigantic old hollow trees affording them abundant homes. My natives brought me some fine honey while I was taking my breakfast ; they found it in an old ant-hill. I was astonished to observe along the banks on the river enormous trees from three to four feet in diameter, cut down by the Bakalahari, only for the sake of the honey which they contain. The Bakalahari fell them with immense trouble and perseverance with little tomahawks of their own formation.

The ant-hills along the Limpopo and throughout this part of Africa are truly wonderful ; it is common to see them upwards of twenty feet high and one hundred feet in circumference. They are composed of clay, which hardens in the sun like a brick ; they have generally one tall tapering spire in the middle of the fabric, the base of the spire being surrounded with similar projections of smaller height. The natives informed me that we were opposite to the tribe Seleka, whom they tried to persuade me to visit, but I resolved to stick to the Limpopo.

On the 22nd we came upon the Macoolwey, a large clear running river, joining the Limpopo from the south-east : here I bagged a princely water-buck.

At dawn of the succeeding day I rode forth to try to cross the Limpopo and hunt for serolomootlooques, but I failed to find a drift. I then rode some distance along the bank of the Macoolwey seeking a passage ; but I was

still unsuccessful. I then retraced my steps to the Limpopo, determined to get through, cost what it might, as the banks looked very promising for serolomootlooques. I discovered a drift, but deep. I returned to camp for fresh horses, and rode forth with two after-riders, and a packhorse carrying bedding, as I had resolved to hunt for serolomootlooques over the river for a couple of days. We got safely through, and held up the stream. I sought every turn of the water on foot, the boys leading my horse, but failed to fall in with a buck serolomootlooque. I therefore retraced my steps down the river to a spot where buffaloes had drunk on the preceding evening, and there I spent the night.

In the morning I rode down to a likely cover for serolomootlooques opposite the drift. Here I started one old buck, but did not fire; he went off barking exactly like a roebuck, which they very much resemble in form, gait, voice, and habit. Following on after this buck, I started two does, one of which I shot. Here I left one of my after-riders with two of the steeds, whilst I and Ruyter rode down the bank of the Limpopo to explore. I found the river wearing quite a different appearance below its junction, being very much broader—nearly as large, indeed, as the Orange River. Crocodiles of enormous size were to be seen at every turn, and I shot four huge fellows. We then fell in with a large rock serpent, or “metsapallah,” about eleven feet long,

which I shot with a ball through the head, and brought to camp slung round my neck.

Having resolved over-night to rob a colony of bees of their precious stores, and to try for the old serolomootlooque at the drift, I started on the 25th at day-dawn, with two after-riders, one of them carrying a large tin pail for the expected honey. After crossing the river I stalked carefully through the cover where the serolomootlooque dwelt. I started him and another buck, but failed to obtain a shot. I then set my after-riders to beat up the cover, and they started them two or three times, but I was still unsuccessful. We now started for the bees' nest, which was in an old hollow tree. I kindled a large fire in front of the hole, and having smoked them with dry grass took out the honey, which was excellent. I got, however, about fifty stings on my hands and arms. In the afternoon I inspanned, and crossed the Macoolwey a few miles above its junction with the Limpopo. The natives again tried hard to lead me to Seleka, but I would not yet leave the Limpopo, and accordingly sheered off to its banks, which I reached by bright moonlight. Here we heard hippopotami snorting in the river, and lions roared near us all night long. Next day I had the luck to shoot two very fine old buck serolomootloouques.

On the 27th I rode down the river at dawn of day, and ordered my waggons to follow in two hours. Whilst riding along the river's bank, some distance beyond the

limits of yesterday's ride, opposite to a broad sandbank densely covered with reeds, I heard a loud plunge, which was immediately followed by the welcome blowing sound of sea-cows. I instantly divested myself of my leather trousers, and went down into the reeds, where I came suddenly upon a crocodile of average size, lying in a shallow back stream; and on his attempting to gain the main river, I shot him with a bullet in the shoulder: he lay dead on the spot. This was the first crocodile which I had managed to lay my hands upon, although I had shot many. The sound of my rifle alarmed the sea-cows; some took up, and some down the river. I was unfortunate with them, shooting two and losing them both. As I was seeking the wounded hippopotami, my waggons came up. Soon after breakfast, the chief Seleka, with a number of his aristocracy, paid me a visit; and in the afternoon I rode down the river, ordering my waggons to follow, and found the fresh spoor of a mighty old bull elephant.

I rode forth at sunrise on the 28th, ordering my waggons to follow in two hours. Seleka had sent men down the river, before it was clear, to seek sea-cows; and they soon came running after me to say that they had found some. I accordingly followed them to the river, where, in a long, broad, and deep bend, were four hippopotami, two full-grown cows, a small cow, and a calf. At the tail of this pool was a strong and rapid stream, which

thundered along in Highland fashion over large masses of dark rock.

On coming to the shady bank, I could at first only see one old cow and calf. When they dived I ran into the reeds, and as the cow came up I shot her in the head ; she, however, got away down the river, and I lost her. The other three took away up the river, and became very shy, remaining under the water for five minutes at a time, and then only popping their heads up for a few seconds. I accordingly remained quiet behind the reeds, in hope of their dismissing their alarms. Presently the two smaller ones seemed to be no longer alarmed, popping up their entire heads, and remaining above water for a minute at a time ; but the third, which was by far the largest, and which I thought must be a bull, continued extremely shy, remaining under the water for ten minutes at a time, and then just showing her face for a second, making a blowing like a whale, and returning to the bottom. I stood there with rifle at my shoulder, and my eye on the sight, until I was quite tired. I thought I should never get a chance at her, and had just resolved to fire at one of the smaller ones, when she shoved up half her head and looked about her. I made a correct shot ; the ball cracked loudly below her ear, and the huge body of the sea-cow came floundering to the top. I was enchanted ; she could not escape. Though not dead she had lost her senses, and continued

swimming round and round, sometimes beneath and sometimes at the surface of the water, creating a fearful commotion.

Hearing my waggons coming on, I sent a message to my followers to outspan, and to come and behold Behemoth floundering in her native element. When they came up I finished her with a shot in the neck, upon which she instantly sank to the bottom, and disappeared in the strong rapid torrent at the tail of the sea-cow hole. There she remained for a long time, and I thought that I had lost her, but the natives said that she would soon reappear. Being in want of refreshment, I left my people to watch for the resurrection of Behemoth, and I held to the waggons to feed. While taking my breakfast there was a loud hue-and-cry among the natives, that the kooboo had floated and was sailing down the river. It was so, and my Hottentots swam in and brought her to the bank. Her flesh proved most excellent. In the afternoon I rode down the river with Ruyter, and shot one very splendid old waterbuck, with a princely head, which I kept.

The next day, after proceeding a few miles, I killed a very fine buck of the serolomootlooque. I again rode down the river's bank, with two after-riders, to seek hippopotami, the natives reporting that they were to be found in a pool in advance, where another river joined the Limpopo. After riding a short distance, I found the banks unusually green and shady, and very much frequented by the sea-

cow ; and presently in a broad, deep, and long still bend of the river, I disturbed the game I sought.

They were lying in their sandy beds among the rank reeds at the river's margin, and on hearing me galloping over the gravelly shingle between the bank and the reeds, the deposit of some great flood, they plunged into their native stronghold in dire alarm, and commenced blowing, snorting, and uttering a sound very similar to that made by the musical instrument called a serpent. It was a fairish place for an attack, so, divesting myself of my leather trousers, I ordered my after-riders to remain utterly silent, and then crept cautiously forward, determined not to fire a shot until I had thoroughly overhauled the herd to see if it did not contain a bull, and at all events to secure, if possible, the very finest head amongst them.

The herd consisted of about fourteen hippopotami ; ten of these were a little farther down the stream than the other four. Having carefully examined these ten, I made out two particular hippopotami decidedly larger than all the others. I then crept a little distance up the river behind the reeds, to obtain a view of the others. They were two enormous old cows with two large calves beside them. The old ones had exactly the same size of head as the two best cows below ; I accordingly chose what I thought the best of these two, and, making a fine shot at the side of her head, I at once

disabled her. She disappeared for a few seconds, and then came floundering to the surface, and continued swimming round and round, sometimes diving, and then reappearing with a loud splash and a blowing noise, always getting slowly down the river, until I reattacked and finished her a quarter of a mile farther down, about an hour after. The other sea-cows were now greatly alarmed, and only occasionally put up their heads, showing but a small part, remaining but a few seconds at a time. I, however, managed to select one of the three remaining ones, and, making a most perfect shot, I sent a bullet crashing into her brain. This caused instantaneous death, and she sank to the bottom. I then wounded two more sea-cows in the head, both of which I lost. The others were so alarmed and cunning that it was impossible to do anything with them.

The one I had first shot was now resting with half her body above water on a sandbank in the Limpopo, at the mouth of the other river Lepalala, which was broad, clear, and rapid. From this resting-place I started her with one shot in the shoulder and another in the side of the head; this last shot set her in motion once more, and she commenced struggling in the water in the most extraordinary manner, disappearing for a few seconds and then coming up like a great whale, setting the whole river in an uproar. Presently she took away down the stream, holding to the other side, but, again returning, I finished her with

a shot in the middle of the forehead. This proved a most magnificent specimen of the female of the wondrous hippopotamus, an animal with which I was extremely surprised and delighted. She far surpassed the brightest conceptions I had formed of her, being a larger, a more lively, and in every way a more interesting animal than certain writers had led me to expect. On securing this fine sea-cow I immediately cut off her head and placed it high and dry: this was a work of considerable difficulty for four men. We left her body in the water, being, of course, unable to do anything with it there. It was well I secured the head when I did, for next morning the crocodiles had dragged her away.

I held up the river to see what the other sea-cows were doing, when, to my particular satisfaction, I beheld the body of the other huge sea-cow which I had shot in the brain floating in the pool where I had shot her, and stationary within about twenty yards of the other side. I then held down the river to the tail of the pool, where the stream was broad and rapid and less likely to hold crocodiles, and here, although cold and worn out, I swam across to secure my game. The waggons now came up, and two of my Hottentots swam over to my assistance; but just as we were going in to secure the sea-cow, she became disengaged from the invisible fetters that had held her, and which turned out to be the branch of a gigantic old tree that some flood had lodged in the bottom of the

pool. The sea-cow now floated down the middle of the river ; when she neared the tail of the pool, we swam in and inclined her course to shore, and stranded her on a fine gravel bank.

This truly magnificent specimen was just about the same size as the first, and apparently older, but her teeth were not quite so thick. Ordering the natives at once to cut off her huge head, and having seen it deposited safely on the bank along with that of her comrade, I held for my waggons, having to cross the Lepalala to reach them. I was very cold and worn out, but most highly gratified at my good fortune in first killing, and then in securing, two out of the four best sea-cows in a herd of fourteen.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Seleka's Town among the Rocks — Elephant-hunting with Seleka and his Men — Trading with Seleka — A Lion and Lioness with their Cubs — An immense Herd of Hippopotami — Nine of them killed — Trap for inflicting poisoned Wounds on Seacows — We cross the Limpopo, and a Waggon sticks in the River — We trek down the Stream — Two of my best Horses killed and eaten by Lions — The chief of the Bamalette visits me — Audacity of the Lions — A Horse killed in a Pitfall — A Chief flogged for catching and consuming a Horse.

On the 1st of July I inspanned at sunrise and marched to the town of the Baseleka, which I reached in about four hours, having crossed the Lepalala on the way. I outspanned on the bank of the river. Seleka's town is built on the top and sides of a steep and precipitous white quartz rock, which rises abruptly, and forms a very remarkable feature in the green forest scenery which surrounds it. In the evening Seleka brought down four fairish bull elephant's teeth, which I bought for four muskets.

On the morrow I took an early breakfast, and then held east with Seleka and about a hundred and fifty of his men to seek elephants, they having heard from the Bakalahari of the position of a troop of bulls. This day I

might reckon as the beginning of my elephant-hunting this season. As the country appeared to me well adapted for the sport, and as I regretted not a little that my men and a good stud of horses should be idle at the waggons while they might be bringing me in fifty pounds once or twice a-week, I armed and mounted John Stofolus and Carey, both of whom vaunted much of their courage and skill. I instructed them, in the event of our finding, to select a good elephant, and, if not able to kill him, at least to hold him in view until I had finished mine, which I promised to do as quickly as possible, and then to come to their assistance.

We had not proceeded far from the white rock when we entered a forest frequented by elephants, and we very soon came upon the fresh spoor of a troop of about ten fine bulls. The spooring was conducted very properly, the old chief taking the greatest care of the wind, keeping his followers far back, and maintaining silence, extending picquets in advance, and to the right and left, and ordering them to ascend to the summits of the tallest trees to obtain a correct view of the surrounding forest. Presently the mighty game was detected. Old Schwartland was led alongside of me, and my dogs were all in the couples, eight in number. I quickly mounted, and, riding slowly forward, obtained a blink of one of the elephants. I called to the natives to slip the dogs, and then dashed forward for a selection. I chose the last, and gave him a shot as he

passed me, and then riding hard under his stern I yelled like a demon to clear him from his comrades and to bring the dogs to my assistance. The dogs came as I expected to my elephant, and I shot him from the saddle in a business-like style, loading and firing with great rapidity; he took from fifteen to twenty shots before he fell. All this time I listened in vain for shots from John or Carey. The former did not even consider himself safe in the same forest with the elephants, and had slunk away from Carey while in sight of a splendid bull; nor did we hear more of him that day. Carey did but little better, for he lost his elephant immediately, one charge being sufficient.

The natives were now fighting with an immense old bull: hearing them, I rode in their direction, and came upon Carey stationary in the forest. Here the dogs took up the scent of an elephant, and I followed them, but they eventually dropped it. I then tried to retrace my steps to the dead elephant, which I did by chance, having lost my way in the level boundless jungle and wandered far. I found a few natives, who reported their captain and most of his men to be still engaged with the elephant, and they said that Carey had joined them in the chase. I off-saddled for a little, but, hearing the cries of the natives in the distance, I saddled old Schwartland, and rode onward till I found the natives and Carey quite done up, and on the point of dropping the game. The elephant,

although red with blood, and resembling a porcupine by the number of the assagais, was little the worse for all that he had received. I then attacked him, and, with eight or ten shots, ended his career.

Next morning, Bakalahari coming up and reporting to have heard elephants during the night, old Seleka and I went in quest of them. We were joined by the gallant and vaunting John Stofolus ; who had slept at the waggons, and swore that he had lost his way in a long chase after an elephant. Both he and Carey expressing regret for their previous mismanagement, and vowing to prove themselves men this day, I allowed them to accompany me. We soon took up the spoor of one old bull, which led us into a forest thoroughly ploughed up and broken with bull elephants. Here this fine fellow joined a glorious squadron of from twenty to thirty mighty bulls. When we discovered their position I dashed forward, shouting to the dogs, and was instantly in the middle of them. Then followed a wondrous scene. The elephants, panic-stricken, charged forward, levelling the forest before them, trumpeting, with trunks and tails aloft, as the dogs mingled with them.

Looking back over my shoulder I beheld elephants come crashing on behind and within a few yards of me. I then pressed forward, overtook about ten bulls that were inclining to the west, rode under their sterns, chose the best, and, yelling at the top of my voice, I separated

him from his comrades, and brought my dogs to my assistance. In a few minutes he had many mortal wounds. Not hearing my trusty John and Carey fire, and the elephant's course being right towards camp, I ceased firing and drove him on before me. Presently these worthies came up to me, having been after a most splendid bull—the cock of the troop—which I, in my haste, had ridden by. They had fired two or three shots, and then left him. I now saw that all my hunting this season must depend on my own single hand, as my followers, instead of a help, were a very great hindrance and annoyance to me. If I had been alone that day I should most certainly have taken more time, and have selected the elephant they had lost, which the natives said carried extremely large and long teeth. Presently, my elephant declining to proceed farther, and, becoming extremely wicked, I recommenced firing, and at last he fell, having received twenty-nine balls, twenty-seven of these being in a very correct part. This was an enormous first-rate bull ; but his teeth, though large, being not the best in the troop, I felt very much dissatisfied.

On the forenoon of the 5th I traded with Seleka for karosses of pallah's skin and tusks of elephants, and in the evening I walked up to inspect the town, and climbed to the summit of the quartz rock on which the citadel of Seleka is situated. Here I viewed the surrounding country ; chains of mountains of moderate height shot

above the level forest in every direction, but mostly to the east and south.

The next day, after breakfast, I saddled up steeds and took the field for elephants, accompanied by two after-riders. We were soon joined by the greater part of the Seleka tribe, and held about south, following the bank of the river Lepalala, which we eventually crossed. Having proceeded some distance through a tract but little frequented by elephants, men who had been sent to seek in a south-westerly direction came and reported that they had found. We then held at once for a steep and very rocky hill which rose abruptly in the forest, and on the west side of which the elephants had been seen. We had ascended about half-way up this hill, the natives following on in a long string and detached parties, when we discovered that we had nearly hemmed in a huge and most daring old lion, with his partner and a troop of very small cubs. I had passed him within about sixty yards, and was a little above him on the hill before I was aware of his presence. He gave us notice of his proximity by loud and continued growling, advancing boldly with open jaws towards the natives. These fled before him; and the lioness having now shrunk away with her cubs, and some of our dogs having attacked him, he turned right about and followed slowly after his mate, growling fearfully.

We feared that all this noise might have started the elephants: when however we had gained a commanding

point on the shoulder of the hill, we could see them standing in a thick low forest a short distance from the base of the hill; it was a troop of very middling cow elephants with a number of calves of all sizes: about half a mile to the north we could see another troop of cows. I wished to attack these, but the natives prevailed upon me to attack the nearest troop. Leaving the greater part of the natives to watch our movements from this elevated position, I descended the hill and held for the mighty game. I felt rather nervous on this occasion. I was not in good health, and the forest here was not well adapted for the sport, the cover being thick, with a great deal of bad wait-a-bit thorns. When we came upon the troop they were considerably scattered, and we first approached two very indifferent cows, which, hearing us, instantly retreated into the thick cover. I would not follow these, but at once slipped my dogs in the hope that they would find me better elephants. The dogs then ran forward in different directions, and immediately a loud trumpeting followed from three detachments of cows. Galloping forward, I obtained a view of them all. There was but one right good cow in the troop: she brought up the rear of a detachment which came crashing past on my right, making for the densest cover round the base of the hill. This cow carried two fine long white tusks, one of them with a very fine sharp point. On attacking her she at once separated from her comrades, and every

one of my dogs took, as is usual, away after the calves ; I galloped up alongside and very near this cow, and firing from the saddle I bowled her over with a single ball behind the shoulder.

On the 11th we marched at dawn of day, holding north-east, and halted on the bank of the Limpopo. There the waggons remained, whilst I hunted the banks of the river, bagging two first-rate bull elephants and one hippopotamus. One of these elephants I shot across the Limpopo, under the mountains of Guapa ; I fought him in dense wait-a-bit jungle from half-past eleven till the sun was under, when his tough old spirit fled, and the venerable monarch of the forest fell, pierced with fifty-seven balls. On the 17th I inspanned and trekked about five miles down the stream, when I halted beside a long deep hippopotamus hole, in which were two bulls and one cow, but it being late I did not trouble them.

The next day I rode down the river to seek sea-cows, accompanied by my two after-riders ; taking, as usual, my double-barrelled rifles. We had proceeded about two miles when we came upon some most thoroughly beaten old-established hippopotamus paths, and presently, in a broad, long, deep, and shaded pool of the river, we heard the sea-cows bellowing. There I beheld one of the most wondrous and interesting sights that a sportsman can be blessed with. I at once knew that there must be an immense herd of them, for the voices came from different

parts of the pool ; so, creeping in through the bushes to obtain an inspection, a large sandy island appeared at the neck of the pool, on which stood several large shady trees.

The neck of the pool was very wide and shallow, with rocks and large stones ; below it was deep and still. On a sandy promontory of this island stood about thirty cows and calves, whilst in the pool opposite, and a little below them, stood about twenty more sea-cows, with their heads and backs above water. About fifty yards farther down the river again, showing out their heads, were eight or ten immense fellows, which I think were all bulls ; and about one hundred yards below these in the middle of the stream stood another herd of about eight or ten cows with calves, and two huge bulls. The sea-cows lay close together like pigs ; a favourite position was to rest their heads on their comrades' sterns and sides. The herds were attended by an immense number of the invariable rhinoceros birds, which, on observing me, did their best to spread alarm throughout the hippopotami. I was resolved to select if possible a first-rate old bull out of this vast herd, and I accordingly delayed firing for nearly two hours, continually running up and down behind the thick thorny cover, and attentively studying the heads. At length I determined to go close in and select the best head out of the eight or ten bulls which lay below the cows. I accordingly left the cover and walked slowly forward in full view of the whole herd to the water's edge,

where I lay down on my belly and studied the heads of these bulls. The cows, on seeing me, splashed into the water and kept up a continual snorting and blowing till night set in.

After selecting for a few minutes I fired my first shot at a splendid bull, and sent the ball in a little behind the eye. He was at once incapacitated, and kept plunging and swimming round and round, wearing away down the pool, until I finished him with two more shots. The whole pool was now in a state of intense commotion. The best cows and the bulls at once became very shy and cunning, showing only the flat roofs of their heads, and sometimes only their nostrils. The younger cows were not so shy, producing the whole head ; and if I had wished to make a bag I might have shot an immense number. This however was not my object ; and as there was likely to be a difficulty in securing what I did kill, I determined only to fire at the very best. When, therefore, the sun went down I had not fired a great many shots, but had bagged five first-rate hippopotami, four cows and one bull, and besides these there were three or four more very severely wounded which were spouting blood throughout the pool.

The next day I removed my waggens to the bank where I had waged successful war with the hippopotami. Here we halted beneath a shady tree with a very dark green leaf, and having drawn up the waggons we cast

loose the trektows, and marching the two spans of oxen down to the edge of the river we dragged out one of the sea-cows high and dry. After breakfast I rode down the river with Carey to seek those I had wounded. Having ridden about three miles down the river, we heard sea-cows snorting; and on dismounting from my horse and creeping in through very dense thorny cover which here clothed the banks, I found a very fine herd of about thirty hippopotami basking in the sun: they lay upon a sand-bank in the middle of the river, in about three feet of water. After taking a long time to make a selection I opened my fire and discharged my four barrels: one sea-cow lay dead, and two others were stunned and took to the other side, but eventually recovered and were not numbered with the slain. I continued with them till sundown and fired a good many shots, but only bagged one other cow: they were very shy and cunning.

On the 20th I again rode down the river to the pool, and found a herd of sea-cows still there; so I remained with them till sundown, and bagged two very first-rate old sea-cows, which were forthcoming next day. This day I detected a most dangerous trap constructed by the Bakalahari for slaying sea-cows. It consisted of a sharp little assagai or spike most thoroughly poisoned, and stuck firmly into the end of a heavy block of thorn-wood about four feet long and five inches in diameter. This

formidable affair was suspended over the centre of a sea-cow path at a height of about thirty feet from the ground by a bark cord which passed over a high branch of a tree and thence to a peg on one side of the path beneath, leading across the path to a peg on the other side, where it was fastened. To the suspending cord were two triggers so constructed that, when the sea-cow struck against the cord which led across the path, the heavy block above was set at liberty, which instantly dropped with immense force with its poisonous dart, inflicting a sure and mortal wound. The bones and old teeth of sea-cows which lay rotting along the bank of the river here evinced the success of this dangerous invention. I remained in the neighbourhood of the pool for several days, during which time I bagged no less than fifteen first-rate hippopotami, the greater portion of them being bulls.

At dawn of day on the 28th we inspanned and marched up the river to the drift. All hands worked hard in cutting down the bank on the opposite side, the Bakalahari assisting us; and in the afternoon we got the cap-tent waggon, which was very lightly laden, through the river with twelve oxen. The baggage-waggon stuck fast in the mud, and remained there all night, with the fore-wheels half way up the bank, and the after-chest under the water; and although we put twenty oxen to it, we could not get it out.

The next day our first work was to reduce the bank on which the waggon stood, after which, with considerable difficulty, we got it out with twenty of my best oxen. The whole day we were busy drying the innumerable contents of the fore and after chests of each waggon, almost everything being thoroughly saturated, and I sustained considerable loss in fine powder, percussion-caps, biscuit, tea, coffee, sugar, and a number of other articles, some of which were damaged and some entirely destroyed.

I marched at dawn of day on the 30th. Seleka and his men and my hired Baquaines had done all in their power to prevent my proceeding farther; but as they could not conceal the waters from me, my course being to follow the Limpopo, I was perfectly independent of them. They remained by me until I crossed the Limpopo, and then they all turned home. I was now once more without natives, and held down the north-western bank of the river, but very soon Bakalahari joined us, and their numbers increased as we held on. I had the good luck this day to bag five more first-rate hippopotami.

The next day, after assisting my men to get out some of the sea-cows, I rode down the river with two after-riders to explore. Having ridden a few miles, I came upon a troop of twelve, the best of which I disabled and killed the next day. This was a most splendid old cow, and carried tusks far superior to any we had yet seen; in the afternoon I bagged six more.

From a continued run of good luck in all my hunting expeditions with my horses and oxen, in regard to lions and Bakalahari pitfalls, I had become foolishly careless of them, and I had got into a most dangerous custom of allowing the cattle to feed about the waggons long after the sun was under. I was always boasting of my good luck, and used to say that the lions knew they were my cattle, and feared to molest them. This night, however, a bitter lesson was in store for me. The sun as usual had been under an hour before I ordered my men to make fast my horses: the oxen had of their own accord come to the waggons and lain down; the horses, however, were not forthcoming. My hired natives, who were now anxious to prevent my proceeding farther from their country, were willingly neglecting their charge, and, instead of looking after my cattle, they were exchanging the flesh and fat of my sea-cows for assagais, &c., with the Bakalahari. The night was very dark, and the horses were sought for in vain. I remarked to Carey that it was some time since we had heard the voice of a lion; but a few minutes after we heard the low moan of the king of beasts repeated several times at no great distance, and in the very direction in which my horses were supposed to be.

The next day the sun had been up two hours, and my horses could not yet be found. I entertained no apprehensions, however, from the lion, but rather suspected some plot between Seleka and my natives to drive my cattle

back, and so force me to retrace my steps. I therefore ordered John Stofolus and Hendrick to take bridles and a supply of meat, and to follow up the spoor wherever it might lead ; and being anxious to see which way it went, I took a rifle and followed in quest of it myself. Observing a number of vultures to the west, and hearing the voices of natives in that direction, I proceeded thither at top speed. To my utter horror, I found my two most valuable and especially favourite veteran shooting-horses lying fearfully mangled and half consumed by a troop of ruthless lions. They were "Black Jock" and "Schwartland," the former a first-rate young horse, worth 24*l.*, the latter aged, but by far my most valuable steed, being perhaps the best shooting-horse in Southern Africa ; he knew no fear, and would approach as near as I chose to elephant or lion, or any description of game. From his back I had shot nearly all my elephants last year ; and so fond was I of this horse, that I never rode or even saddled him until we had found elephants, when I used him in the fight and then immediately off-saddled.

With a sickening heart I turned from this most painful scene, and, utterly dejected, I returned to camp. As there was much to do about the waggons, and as two of my men were absent seeking the lost horses, I did not immediately go in quest of the lions ; this I however did in the afternoon, taking all my dogs, but I failed to find them. A large party of the natives from the south-west,

the Bamalette, reached me late in the day : their object was flesh, and to endeavour to persuade me to come and trade with them. They had fallen in with three of my steeds, the others were found by my men near the drift where I had last crossed the river. I formed a very strong kraal for my cattle, and made all fast at sundown. Very soon after, the troop of lions came up to my camp on the spoor of the horses, fancying that they could repeat the tragedy of last night; they fought with my dogs in the most daring manner, off and on, until near dawn of day, driving them in to the fire-side. The cattle were very restive, and nearly broke away, but the kraal was good and saved them.

In the morning, ordering my waggons to follow, I rode down the river, followed by at least two hundred natives, to secure the hippopotami shot two days previous. Six of these were forthcoming, and we set about getting them to the side : they lay upon the rocks in the middle of the river. One of these proved to be an out-and-outer, a tearing old bull with tusks which far surpassed anything I had yet seen, and quite perfect; I was very much gratified with this fine trophy. There were also two of the cows which carried immense and perfect tusks. When the waggons came up, I found myself minus another steed : a fine young mare had fallen into a Bakalahari pitfall, and had been suffocated.

On the 5th I rode down the river and fell in with a large herd of about thirty hippopotami: they lay upon some rocks in the middle of a very long and broad pool. I wounded seven or eight of these in the head, and killed two, a bull and a cow, both of which we found next day. At night the lions prowled around our camp, and fought with the dogs until the morning: they came boldly in between the fires of the natives, who lay around my camp.

The next day I ordered my waggons to come on, and I rode ahead to the pool where I had last shot. When the waggons came up, I detected the head Bakalahari of the kraal beside which my mare had been killed; he was talking with my cattle herds, with whom he seemed to be on very intimate terms. This killing of my horse was either intentional or most culpably careless, as the pits were left covered, and the cattle driven to pasture in the middle of them; I accordingly deemed it proper that this man should be made an example of; so, calling to my English servant, Carey, to assist me, we each seized an arm of the guilty chief, and I then caused Hendrick to flog him with a sea-cow jambok; after which I admonished him, and told him that if the holes were not opened in future I would make a more severe example as I proceeded. The consequence of this salutary admonition was, that all the pitfalls along the river were thrown open in advance

of my march, a thing which I had never before seen among the Bechuana tribes. In the afternoon I rode down the river a few pools, and found a very fine herd of about thirty hippopotami. I wounded three or four of these, and killed one.

CHAPTER XXVII.

We trek down the Limpopo — Abundance of Sea-cows — The Lotsane River — An immense Herd of Elephants — Combat with a first-rate old Bull — Rheumatic Fever attacks me, which determines our course homewards — Elephants smashing Forest-trees — A Lion carries off one of my men from the fireside — The Beast occupied consuming him all night — The man-eating Lion slain — Three Hippopotami shot — One of the Dogs eaten by a Crocodile — The fatal "Tsetse" fly — The Fountain of Seboono — An old Bull-Elephant held in check without Gun or Dogs.

I RESOLVED now to cease for a time hunting sea-cows, and to trek ahead in good earnest. I accordingly took considerable trouble in stowing the waggon properly. We then trekked down the river until sundown. I rode ahead of the waggon to explore, and was struck with astonishment at the number of the hippopotami. They seemed to increase the farther I trekked down the river; every pool had its herd; they were extremely fearless, allowing me to approach within fifteen yards of them. In the morning I found myself minus my hired natives: these ruffians, fearing to receive a chastisement similar to that of the chief of the Bakalahari, which they felt they deserved, thought it best to get out of the way in time, and had cut the service. The chief Matsaca brought

me ivory, which I obtained in barter for muskets and some ammunition.

On the 8th we trekked at dawn of day, and after proceeding a few miles came upon the Lotsane, one of those gravelly-bedded rivers, with only water in occasional spots, such as are met with in the Bamangwato country. Here was much spoor of elephant; and the natives pressing me to halt and hunt, I outspanned and got everything ready for a trip from the waggons.

The next morning I started with a party of natives to seek elephants. We held along the banks of the Lotsane for several miles, holding a north-westerly course; after which we left the river and held south-west; and, at last, followed down to the Limpopo, and so home to camp, without finding a single fresh spoor. Here I found my old friends from Bamangwato, Molyeon and Kapain, with a party. I was glad to see these men, as I knew they would assist me in my hunting, and they could also converse with me.

On the 10th, at dawn of day, I rode down the river, and ordered my waggons to follow. I found sea-cows more and more abundant; every pool had its herd: the margin of the river on each side was trampled down by elephants, rhinoceroses, buffaloes, &c. Having ridden about six miles, I found the fresh spoor of a troop of bull elephants. I off-saddled, and in an hour the waggons came up, when I took up the spoor, accompanied by Carey,

Hendrick, and Ruyter. After following the spoor for some miles, the natives lost it. A little distance ahead of us was a rocky hill, to the summit of which I ascended. This spot commanded a good view of the adjacent forest. I at once detected an immense herd of elephants. They were drinking in a wide open spot on a gravelly-bedded river which falls into the Limpopo, called by the natives Sukung.

We then made a turn to leeward and came in upon this fine herd ; it was the largest I had ever seen ; there must have been upwards of one hundred elephants before my eye at once. The troop consisted chiefly of cows and calves ; I however detected one fine well-grown bull, carrying very fair tusks. I rode slowly towards him, followed by my men, and the natives leading the dogs. We advanced unobserved until we were within twenty yards of some of the outside cows. Here I enjoyed a fine view of the herd ; they stood drinking on a vast surface of granite rock, and, though no trees intervened between us and them, they took not the slightest notice of us.

At length I gave the bull a shot in the shoulder and then followed him up. He stumbled, and fell once upon the slippery rock, but, recovering his feet, went off at a pace which I could hardly equal on the dangerous rock. By good luck, most of my dogs came to my assistance, and I slew him in a few minutes with eight or ten shots. I had directed Hendrick and Carey to try to

hold some of the cows for me until I was ready with the bull ; accordingly, these doughty Nimrods followed and turned four cows for a short time, and then left them, without even firing a shot to advise me of their course ; the consequence of which was, that I knocked up myself, my dogs, and horses, in chasing the retreating herd to a great distance, to no purpose.

On the following day I shot another bull elephant and a white rhinoceros ; and on the afternoon of the 12th, returning to camp weary and worn, I came unexpectedly upon a bull elephant of unusual size, standing in the shade on the margin of the Limpopo. He took refuge in an extensive jungle of impracticable wait-a-bits, where it was impossible to do anything on horseback, and I was therefore obliged to hunt him on foot. I slew him with thirty bullets after an extremely severe and dangerous combat of about two hours. I afterwards felt much the worse for this severe exertion.

On the 14th I despatched Hendrick to bring on the waggons, which came up in the afternoon. Night set in warm, calm, and still, with a good moonlight. Elephants, sea-cows, and panthers kept up a continued music above and below us along the river until I fell asleep.

On the 15th I felt very ill, but in the forenoon I went down to the river, where I shot two sea-cows. In the evening, feeling worse, I bled myself, but strong fever was on me all night.

Next morning I marched, halting at sundown on the Mokojay, a gravelly-bedded periodical river, where elephants occasionally drank.

On the 18th at dawn of day I took leave of Mollyeon and Kapain of Bamangwato, as they would not follow me farther. We then inspanned, and held down the Limpopo. I regretted to observe that the spoor of elephants did not seem to increase in the same ratio as I had allowed myself to imagine. We were in an extremely remote and secluded corner of the world, quite uninhabited ; yet the elephants, though frequenting it, were decidedly scarce. I felt extremely weak and nervous from the fever and the quantity of blood which I had lost, in so much that I started at my own shadow, and several times sprang to one side when the leaves rustled in the bushes. I walked along the bank of the river with my gun loaded with small shot, intending to shoot a partridge for my breakfast. Presently I came upon the fresh dung of bull elephants, and at the same moment my people at the waggons saw two old bull elephants within two hundred yards of them ; and the wind being favourable, they walked unsuspectingly. After a very short chase I succeeded in killing both.

My fever still continuing on me, and the natives having deserted, I determined upon turning my face homewards. Accordingly, on the 21st, I ordered my men to inspan and retrace their spoor. A troop of lions had killed

some game within a few hundred yards of us, and had been roaring very loudly all the morning: these gave us a parting salute as we were inspanning. Their voices sounded to me ominous, perhaps from the nervous state of my health. I thought they said, "Yes, you do well to retrace your rash steps; you have just come far enough." I must acknowledge that I felt a little anxious as to the safety of proceeding farther on several accounts. First, the natives had spoken of Moselekatse, now resident not very far in advance, as one who would most unquestionably murder me, and seize all my property. They also told me that I should lose all my cattle by the fly called "Tsetse;" and I had also reason to believe the country in advance not very healthy for man.

My followers received my orders to turn homewards with sincere gratification: we trekked till sundown, halting on the march for a sick ox, which we eventually left behind a prey to the lions, and slept on the Mokojay, where the Bamangwato men had left me.

On the 29th we arrived at a small village of Bakalahari. These natives told me that elephants were abundant on the opposite side of the river. I accordingly resolved to halt here and hunt, and drew my waggons up on the river's bank, within thirty yards of the water and about one hundred yards from the native village. Having outspanned, we at once set about making for the cattle a kraal of the worst description of thorn-trees. Of this I

had now become very particular, since my severe loss by lions on the first of this month; and my cattle were, at night, secured by a strong kraal, which enclosed my two waggons, the horses being made fast to a trektow stretched between the hind-wheels of the waggons. I had yet, however, a fearful lesson to learn as to the nature and character of the lion, of which I had at one time entertained so little fear; and on this night a horrible tragedy was to be acted in my little lonely camp of so very awful and appalling a nature as to make the blood curdle in our veins. I worked till near sundown at one side of the kraal with Hendrick, my first waggon-driver—I cutting down the trees with my axe, and he dragging them to the kraal. When the kraal for the cattle was finished, I turned my attention to making a pot of barley-broth, and lighted a fire between the waggons and the water, close on the river's bank, under a dense grove of shady trees, making no sort of kraal around our sitting-place for the evening.

The Hottentots, without any reason, made their fire about fifty yards from mine; they, according to their usual custom, being satisfied with the shelter of a large dense bush. The evening passed away cheerfully. Soon after it was dark we heard elephants breaking the trees in the forest across the river; and once or twice I strode away into the darkness some distance from the fireside, to stand and listen to them. I little, at that

moment, deemed of the imminent peril to which I was exposing my life, nor thought that a bloodthirsty man-eater lion was crouching near, and only watching his opportunity to spring into the kraal, and consign one of us to a most horrible death. About three hours after the sun went down I called to my men to come and take their coffee and supper, which was ready for them at my fire; and after supper three of them returned before their comrades to their own fireside, and lay down; these were John Stofolus, Hendrick, and Ruyter. In a few minutes an ox came out by the gate of the kraal and walked round the back of it. Hendrick got up and drove him in again, and then went back to his fireside and lay down. Hendrick and Ruyter lay on one side of the fire under one blanket, and John Stofolus lay on the other. At this moment I was sitting taking some barley-broth; our fire was very small, and the night was pitch-dark and windy. Owing to our proximity to the native village the wood was very scarce, the Bakalahari having burnt it all in their fires.

Suddenly the appalling and murderous voice of an angry bloodthirsty lion burst upon my ear within a few yards of us, followed by the shrieking of the Hottentots. Again and again the murderous roar of attack was repeated. We heard John and Ruyter shriek "The lion! the lion!" still, for a few moments, we thought he was but chasing one of the dogs round the kraal; but,





The Fate of poor Hendrick.

next instant, John Stofolus rushed into the midst of us almost speechless with fear and terror, his eyes bursting from their sockets, and shrieked out, "The lion! the lion! He has got Hendrick; he dragged him away from the fire beside me. I struck him with the burning brands upon his head, but he would not let go his hold. Hendrick is dead! Oh, God! Hendrick is dead! Let us take fire and seek him." The rest of my people rushed about, shrieking and yelling as if they were mad. I was at once angry with them for their folly, and told them that if they did not stand still and keep quiet the lion would have another of us; and that very likely there was a troop of them. I ordered the dogs, which were nearly all fast, to be made loose, and the fire to be increased as far as could be. I then shouted Hendrick's name, but all was still. I told my men that Hendrick was dead, and that a regiment of soldiers could not now help him, and, hunting my dogs forward, I had everything brought within the cattle-kraal, when we lighted our fire and closed the entrance as well as we could.

My terrified people sat round the fire with guns in their hands till the day broke, still fancying that every moment the lion would return and spring again into the midst of us. When the dogs were first let go, the stupid brutes, as dogs often prove when most required, instead of going at the lion, rushed fiercely on one another, and fought desperately for some minutes. After this they

got his wind, and, going at him, disclosed to us his position: they kept up a continued barking until the day dawned, the lion occasionally springing after them and driving them in upon the kraal. The horrible monster lay all night within forty yards of us, consuming the wretched man whom he had chosen for his prey. He had dragged him into a little hollow at the back of the thick bush, beside which the fire was kindled, and there he remained till the day dawned, careless of our proximity.

It appeared that when the unfortunate Hendrick rose to drive in the ox, the lion had watched him to his fireside, and he had scarcely lain down when the brute sprang upon him and Ruyter (for both lay under one blanket), with his appalling murderous roar, and, roaring as he lay, grappled him with his fearful claws, and kept biting him on the breast and shoulder, all the while feeling for his neck; having got hold of which, he at once dragged him away backwards round the bush into the dense shade.

As the lion lay upon the unfortunate man he faintly cried "Help me, help me! Oh, God! men, help me!" After which the fearful beast got a hold of his neck, and then all was still, except that his comrades heard the bones of his neck cracking between the teeth of the lion. John Stofolus had lain with his back to the fire on the opposite side, and on hearing the lion he sprang up, and, seizing a large flaming brand, he had belaboured him on

the head with the burning wood ; but the brute did not take any notice of him. The Bushman had a narrow escape ; he was not altogether scatheless, the lion having inflicted two gashes in his seat with his claws.

The next morning, just as the day began to dawn, we heard the lion dragging something up the river-side under cover of the bank. We drove the cattle out of the kraal, and then proceeded to inspect the scene of the night's awful tragedy. In the hollow, where the lion had lain consuming his prey, we found one leg of the unfortunate Hendrick, bitten off below the knee, the shoe still on his foot ; the grass and bushes were all stained with his blood, and fragments of his pea-coat lay around. Poor Hendrick ! I knew the fragments of that old coat, and had often marked them hanging in the dense covers where the elephant had charged after my unfortunate after-rider. Hendrick was by far the best man I had about my waggons, of a most cheerful disposition, a first-rate waggon-driver, fearless in the field, ever active, willing, and obliging : his loss to us all was very serious. I felt confounded and utterly sick in my heart ; I could not remain at the waggons, so I resolved to go after elephants to divert my mind. I had that morning heard them breaking the trees on the opposite side of the river. I accordingly told the natives of the village of my intentions ; and having ordered my people to devote the day to fortifying the kraal, I started

with Piet and Ruyter as my after-riders. It was a very cool day. We crossed the river, and at once took up the fresh spoor of a troop of bull elephants. These bulls unfortunately joined a troop of cows, and when we came on them the dogs attacked the cows, and the bulls were off in a moment, before we could even see them. One remarkably fine old cow charged the dogs. I hunted this cow, and finished her with two shots from the saddle. Being anxious to return to my people before night, I did not attempt to follow the troop. My followers were not a little gratified to see me returning, for terror had taken hold of their minds, and they expected that the lion would return, and, emboldened by the success of the preceding night, would prove still more daring in his attack. The lion would most certainly have returned, but fate had otherwise ordained. My health had been better in the last three days : my fever was leaving me, but I was, of course, still very weak. It would still be two hours before the sun would set, and, feeling refreshed by a little rest, and able for further work, I ordered the steeds to be saddled, and went in search of the lion.

I took John and Carey as after-riders, armed, and a party of the natives followed up the spoor and led the dogs. The lion had dragged the remains of poor Hendrick along a native footpath that led up the river-side. We found fragments of his coat all along the spoor, and at last the mangled coat itself. About six hundred yards

from our camp a dry river's course joined the Limpopo. At this spot was much shade, cover, and heaps of dry reeds and trees deposited by the Limpopo in some great flood. The lion had left the footpath and entered this secluded spot. I at once felt convinced that we were upon him, and ordered the natives to make loose the dogs. These walked suspiciously forward on the spoor, and next minute began to spring about, barking angrily, with all their hair bristling on their backs: a crash upon the dry reeds immediately followed—it was the lion bounding away.

Several of the dogs were extremely afraid of him, and kept rushing continually backwards and springing aloft to obtain a view. I now pressed forward and urged them on; old Argyll and Bles took up his spoor in gallant style and led on the other dogs. Then commenced a short but lively and glorious chase, whose conclusion was the only small satisfaction that I could obtain to answer for the horrors of the preceding evening. The lion held up the river's bank for a short distance and took away through some wait-a-bit thorn cover, the best he could find, but nevertheless open. Here, in two minutes, the dogs were up with him, and he turned and stood at bay. As I approached he stood, his horrid head right to me, with open jaws growling fiercely, his tail waving from side to side.

On beholding him my blood boiled with rage. I wished

that I could take him alive and torture him, and, setting my teeth, I dashed my steed forward within thirty yards of him and shouted, "*Your* time is up, old fellow." I halted my horse, and, placing my rifle to my shoulder, I waited for a broadside. This, the next moment, he exposed, when I sent a bullet through his shoulder and dropped him on the spot. He rose, however, again, when I finished him with a second in the breast. The Bakalahari now came up in wonder and delight. I ordered John to cut off his head and forepaws and bring them to the waggons, and mounting my horse I galloped home, having been absent about fifteen minutes. When the Bakalahari women heard that the man-eater was dead, they all commenced dancing about with joy, calling me *their father*.

On the 6th of September, there being no flesh in camp, I galloped up the river-side to slay a hippopotamus, and presently heard a troop of them chanting behind me: I had ridden past them and not observed them. With these I was unlucky: I wounded six or seven, but did not bag one; they became very shy and cunning after the first shot, only protruding their noses. At midday I returned to camp and drank tea, after which I galloped down the river to a favourite sea-cow pool about a mile below my waggons: I was accompanied by natives carrying my rifles. I found an immense herd of at least thirty hippopotami lying

upon the rocks in the middle of the river. I shot the best bull and two fine old cows, and wounded a fourth. The bull and the two cows soon floated, and all three rested together on a ledge of rocks in the middle of the river. I then sent for John and Adonis, and with the assistance of the Bakalahari we got them into shallow water, where we could work upon them.

I was occupied most of the next day in superintending the cutting up of the flesh of the sea-cows, and reducing the same to biltongue, which we hung in garlands upon ox-rheims stretched between the trees, surrounding them by a strong kraal of thorn-trees.

In the evening a large party of Seleka's Bechuanas arrived at my camp. On the 8th one of my horses died of horse sickness; it was of course my favourite, being my best shooting-horse. On reaching camp after my last hunting excursion, "Lion," my very best dog, was reported consumed by a huge crocodile, who frequented the spot where we drew water: for such little pleasing varieties the African hunter must make up his mind; they are mere occurrences of every day.

I saddled up at an early hour, and went in quest of elephants with Seleka's men. We crossed the Limpopo and then held east through the forest for the strong fountain called Seboono. I was unlucky here, however, as I also was next day, although we hunted by a splendid fountain in a more southerly direction. When under

the mountains I met with the famous fly called "tsetse," whose bite is certain death to oxen and horses. This "hunter's scourge" is similar to a fly in Scotland called "kleg," but a little smaller; they are very quick and active, and storm a horse like a swarm of bees, alighting on him in hundreds and drinking his blood. The animal thus bitten pines away and dies at periods varying from a week to three months, according to the extent to which he has been bitten.

On the 10th the chief Pocoolway arrived with a large retinue: he was a short stout man, of a prepossessing expression, and both in appearance and manner much reminded me of a certain Scottish Earl.

After three or four days' unsuccessful hunting I resolved on the 14th, there being good moonlight, to try what might be done with the elephants by night-shooting at the fountains, and I determined to make Carey shoot with me, he using the big rifle of six to the pound, and I my single-barrelled two-grooved of eight to the pound. In the forenoon we were occupied making very hard bullets and sorting our ammunition, &c. &c., for a week's expedition, and at midday we started, followed by about sixty natives. We crossed the Limpopo, and held about east, right away through the forest, for the fountain which I had visited on the 8th. On our line of march we found no fresh spoor: the day was extremely hot, and the shuffling Bechuanas chose to lag behind in the forest until

they lost me entirely, with the exception of three or four who kept up with Piet my after-rider, carrying my gun, and leading "Filbert" and "Frochum," two of my best dogs. Not one of these men knew the country, and they had no Bakalahari with them to act as guides. When I reached the small fountain which lies west of the famous fountain for which I was steering, I told Piet to come on with the natives, and that I would ride ahead to the large fountain. I then galloped ahead, and made the fountain on its lee side. On slowly emerging from the thorny thicket through which I rode, I was astonished to behold two superb old bull elephants standing before me in the open space between the cover and the fountain. Both of them carried enormous tusks; one bull however was much taller and stouter than his comrade; I had very rarely seen his match, and his tusks at once took my eye as being perhaps the finest I had ever beheld. Here then was I standing without gun or dogs, and with a very jaded steed, beside, as I afterwards had good reason to believe, the very best elephant in all that district, and in perhaps many of the surrounding parts. I would have given anything at that moment for my gun and dogs.

I felt much perplexed what to do, but at length I resolved that it was best to hold the elephants in my view, and in the event of their being started to endeavour to hold the larger bull in play, and hunt him always back toward the fountain, until assistance should arrive. It

was well that I came to so shrewd a resolution, for I had not stood sentry over them for many minutes, when, some straggling party having missed the fountain, and passing to windward, they suddenly tossed up their trunks, and, snuffing the tainted gale, they crashed past me down-wind at top speed.

Now came the tug of war. I had no child's play before me: alone and unassisted, and on a very jaded steed, I had resolved to endeavour what no two of my men had ever accomplished for me. I had not only to stick by the elephant wherever he chose to go, which was all I required of my people when endeavouring to assist me in my hunting, but I must also drive him back and keep him by the fountain, or else all my exertions would be fruitless.

I had very slight hope of success, but he was well worthy of a tough struggle, and I determined that he should have it. I thought what my feelings would be that night by my fireside if I let him escape, and on the other hand how highly I should prize his noble trophies if I succeeded. I at once dashed after him and separated him from his comrade. When he found that I had the speed of him he turned at once upon me and charged furiously back towards the fountain, after which he tried to conceal himself among the trees, and, having stood motionless for some time with his head towards me, he crashed away through the forest to the southward. I soon

headed him again, yelling with all my might. Of course another charge followed : I eventually managed however to drive him back close to the fountain ; still no assistance hove in sight. My after-rider, though he had been there before, had missed the fountain. It was he and the natives with him who had started the elephants : they had crossed the fountain to windward, and were wandering about with my gun and dogs some miles beyond me.

It were long to describe all the turns and twists I had with this princely old bull. I certainly did my duty, and stuck by him like a good old deer-hound by his stag. At length the elephant became extremely fierce, following up his charges with most determined intent to crush me and my steed, which, at first very much jaded, was now so completely done up that he could barely hold his own. I myself felt much exhausted, and my throat was becoming so sore and hoarse that my shouting was for the present nearing to a close. In this state of things I could not have held him much longer. Help was, however, at hand. Carey and Mutchuisho, with a large party of the natives, were at this moment carefully following up the spoor of my horse where I had first ridden ahead to the fountain, and were passing a considerable distance to leeward of where I was at bay, or rather, I should say, baying, when my hoarse voice fell on Carey's ear, and he instantly called silence among the natives and sat listening in his saddle. A second time my voice fell

on his ear, and he at once held forward right for me, contrary to the opinion of the thick-headed natives, who swore that the voice came from behind.

Fortunately at this very moment the elephant made a furious charge after me, accompanied by a tremendous trumpet which at once sealed his fate. They all heard it, and "Cooley" and "Affriar," two right good dogs, were instantly released from the couples and flew to my assistance, followed by Carey and the natives. Right glad was I when I saw black Cooley come up to help me. I at once felt that the elephant was mine, being certain that further assistance was at hand, and, with revived spirits, I yelled with all my might. In two minutes up came Carey on horseback, but without a gun. I called out to him, "For God's sake, Carey, bring me a gun! here is the finest elephant in Africa; I have held him at bay and fought with him for nearly two hours." Carey rode back and brought me his single-barrelled smooth bore, carrying twelve to the pound, and gave me eight bullets out of his belt, expressing immense regret that my gun was not forthcoming. Carey had always an absurd idea that his gun could not kill an elephant: to-day, however, it was in other hands. "My good fellow," I said, "it is all right; the elephant is ours."

I then opened my fire on him from the saddle. I put my seventh bullet through his heart: on receiving it he made a short charge and stood trembling for a

few seconds, when he fell forward on his breast and so lay ; but evincing a desire to alter his position, which was a very good one for cutting out the teeth, I dismounted, and, going close up to him, I put two bullets into his ear, when he expired. The tusks of this elephant equalled my expectations ; one of them, as usual, was more perfect than its fellow. I had never seen their match but once. On reviewing the whole afternoon's work, I considered myself extremely fortunate in capturing this noble prize, and I felt most gratified with the satisfactory termination of my exertions. Piet and his party heard my shots, and they presently came up to us ; coffee and other good things were soon spread out on a sheep-skin, and a comfortable sofa being quickly constructed of soft grass, covered with a kaross, I lay down to rest, the happiest of the happy.

The 15th was an extremely hot day. Carey and I were occupied all the morning cutting out the tusks of the big bull elephant ; we took particular care not to let the blood fall upon them. In the evening we made hiding-places beside the fountain from which to shoot elephants, and when the sun went down we returned thither and took up our positions for the night. Unfortunately the dead elephant lay directly to windward of the southern margin of the fountain, on which side were all the best elephant-footpaths. The consequence was that every elephant as he came up got the wind of the natives and turned right

about. Late in the night a troop of eight or ten bull elephants walked slowly across the vley with their heads to the north. I rushed forward to get before them in the wind, and running down the edge of the thorn cover I got within thirty yards of the last bull, which was the best in the troop. Observing me move, he stood with his tusks up and his head directed towards me in a very suspicious manner for two minutes, when his fears died away, and he turned to me his left side. I then gave him a deadly shot which brought blood from his trunk, as I ascertained next day. Returning from firing at him I met Carey; his pluck had failed him, and he had dropped behind. On upbraiding him for not standing by me, he swore stoutly that he had stuck in the mud! as we had to cross a bog below the fountain in running for the shot. I thought this was good, and I said to myself, "I have got a name for you at last." But Carey was a good servant, and very attentive to me throughout my expedition.

The next morning I and Mutchuisho took up the spoor of my wounded elephant. He had gone off very slowly, with blood running from his trunk. After following the spoor some distance we lost it amongst others, and we then gave it up. I sent Carey to the waggons with the teeth, to act as escort, they being well worthy of an escort, and at night I watched the fountain along with three Bakalahari. We had not been long on the watch before three enormous old bull-elephants came; and, after

much hesitation, and walking once or twice round the water, they came in and commenced drinking. I lay close to the edge of the fountain in a little hollow. The elephants came in to drink on the north side of a run which led away from the fountain, and I lay on the south side of it. Suddenly the finest bull of the three walked boldly through the run and came straight forward to where I lay. If I had remained still he would have walked upon me; but when he came within six or eight yards I gave a loud cough, upon which he tossed his head aloft and gave me a broadside, exposing his left side. I then gave him a shot from the big two-grooved rifle, and he dashed off with his two comrades in immense consternation, holding for the Limpopo.

The next day one of my steeds died of "tsetse." He had been bitten under the mountain range lying to the south of this fountain. The head and body of the poor animal swelled up in a most distressing manner before he died. His eyes were so swollen that he could not see, and in darkness he neighed for his comrades who stood feeding beside him.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Paapaa Fountain — Watch by Moonlight from a Shooting-hole — Remarkable Sport with Elephants — Four bagged and eight mortally wounded in one night — Elephant-hunting with Horse and Dogs by Moonlight — A Troop of Lions — The Vultures with the shadowy Wings — Another Dog snapped up by a Crocodile — The Skeleton of an Elephant shot by me discovered — The Tusks being gone, strong measures are adopted for their recovery.

On the 17th of September I resolved to leave the fountain of Seboono, as it was much disturbed, and to proceed with a few Bakalahari to a small yet famous water about six miles to the south-east. We accordingly saddled up and held thither. On reaching this fountain, which is called by the natives "Paapaa," I found the numerous footpaths leading to it covered, as I had anticipated, with fresh spoor of elephant and rhinoceros. I then at once proceeded to study the best spot on which to make our shooting-hole for the night. It would be impossible to prevent some of the game from getting our wind, for the footpaths led to it from every side. The prevailing wind was from the east, so I pitched upon the south-west corner of the fountain. The water was not more than twenty yards long and ten yards broad.

The west side was bounded by tufous rock which rose abruptly from the water about five feet high. The top of this rock was level with the surrounding vley, and here all the elephants drank as if suspicious of treading on the muddy margin on the other three sides of the fountain. I made our shooting-box within six or eight yards of the water, constructing it in a circular form, of bushes packed together so as to form a hedge about three feet high. On the top of the hedge I placed heavy dead old branches of trees, so as to form a fine clear rest for our rifles; these clean old branches were all lashed firmly together with strips of thorn bark. All being completed, I took the Bakalahari and our steeds to a shady tree, about a quarter of a mile to leeward of the fountain, where we formed a kraal and off-saddled. This day was particularly adapted to bring game to the water, the sun being extremely powerful, and a hot dry wind prevailing all the afternoon. I told Carey that we were certain of having a good night's sport, and I was right, for we undoubtedly had about the finest night's sport and the most wonderful that was ever enjoyed by man.

A little before the sun went down, leaving our kraal, we held to the fountain, having with us our heavy-metalled rifles, karosses, and two Bakalahari. We also had two small guns, my double-barrelled Westley Richards, and Carey's single-barrelled gun. As we approached the fountain, a stately bull giraffe stood

before us ; the heat of the day had brought him thither, but he feared to go in and drink ; on observing us he walked slowly away. Two jackals were next detected. Guinea fowl, partridges, two or three sorts of pigeon and turtle-dove, and small birds in countless thousands, were pouring in to drink from every airt, as we walked up to our hiding-place and lay down. In a few minutes the sun was under ; but the moon was strong and high (it being within three nights of the full), and the sky was clear, with scarcely a cloud. Very soon a step was heard approaching from the east ; it was a presuming black rhinoceros. He came up within ten yards of the hiding-hole, and, observing us with his sharp prying eye, he at once came slowly forward for a nearer inspection. I then shouted to him ; but this he did not heed in the slightest. I then sprang up and waved my large kaross, shouting at the same time. This, however, only seemed to amuse Borèlé, for he stood within four yards of us, with his horn threatening our momentary destruction, nor would he wheel about until I threw a log of wood at him. Black rhinoceroses are very difficult to scare when they do not get the wind ; the best way to do so is to hit them with a stone,—that is, in the event of the sportsman not wishing to fire off his gun.

Soon after Borèlé departed four old bull elephants drew near from the south. They were coming right on for the spot where we lay, and they seemed very likely

to walk over the top of us. We therefore placed our two big rifles in position, and awaited their forward movement with intense interest. On they came with a slow and stately step, until within twenty yards of us, when the leading elephant took it into his head to pass to leeward. We let him come on until he got our wind ; he was then within ten yards of the muzzles of our heavy-metalled rifles ; on winding us he tossed his trunk aloft, and we instantly fired together. I caught him somewhere about the heart, and my big six-pound rifle burst in Carey's hands, very nearly killing us both. The elephant on being fired at wheeled about, and retreated to the forest at top speed. I now directed "Stick-in-the-mud" to make use of his single-barrelled twelve to the pound, in the event of more elephants coming up ; and thanking my stars that the old Dutch rifle had not sent us both to the land of the leal, I sat down and watched the dark masses of trees that cut the sky on every side, in the hope of seeing a mass as high and wide come towering forward into the open space that surrounded the fountain.

Nor did I watch long in vain, for very soon three princely bull elephants appeared exactly where the first came on, and holding exactly the same course. They approached just as the first had done. When the leading elephant came within ten yards of us he got our wind, and tossed up his trunk, and was wheeling round to retreat, when we fired together and sent our bullets some-

where about his heart. He ran two hundred yards and then stood, being evidently dying. His comrades halted likewise, but one of them, the finest of the three, almost immediately turned his head once more to the fountain, and very slowly and warily came on. We now heard the wounded elephant utter the cry of death, and fall heavily on the earth. Carey, whose ears were damaged by the bursting of the big rifle, did not catch this sound, but swore that the elephant which now so stealthily approached the water was the one at which we had fired.

It was interesting to observe this grand old bull approach the fountain: he seemed to mistrust the very earth on which he stood, and smelt and examined with his trunk every yard of the ground before he trod on it, and sometimes stood five minutes on one spot without moving. At length, having gone round three sides of the fountain, and being apparently satisfied as to the correctness of everything, he stepped boldly forward on to the rock on the west, and, walking up within six or seven yards of the muzzles of our rifles, he turned his broadside, and, lowering his trunk into the water, drew up a volume of water, which he threw over his back and shoulders to cool his person. This operation he repeated two or three times, after which he commenced drinking, by drawing the water into his trunk and then pouring it into his mouth. I determined to break his leg if possible, so, covering the limb about level



Elephant-Shooting by Moonlight

with the lower line of his body, I fired, Carey firing for his heart. I made a lucky shot; and as the elephant turned and attempted to make away, his leg broke with a loud crack, and he stood upon his three sound ones. At once disabled and utterly incapable of escaping, he stood statue-like beside the fountain, within a few yards of where he had got the shot, and only occasionally made an attempt at locomotion.

The patch of my rifle fired at this elephant's comrade had ignited a large ball of dry old dung, about eight yards to leeward of our kraal, and, fanned by the breeze, it was now burning away very brightly, the sparks flying in the wind. Presently, on looking about me, I beheld two bull elephants approaching by the self-same footpath which the others had held. The first of these was a half-grown bull, the last was an out-and-out old fellow with enormous tusks. They came on as the first had done, but seemed inclined to pass to windward of us. The young bull however observed the fire; he at once walked up to it, and smelling at it with his trunk he seemed extremely amused, and in a gambolling humour threw his trunk about, as if not knowing what to think of it. The larger bull now came up, and exposed a fine broadside: we took him behind the shoulder and fired together: on receiving the shots he wheeled about and held west with drooping ears, evidently mortally wounded.

Some time after this I detected an enormous old bull elephant approaching from the west. If we lay still where we were, he must in a few minutes get our wind, so we jumped up and ran forward out of his line of march. Here a borèlé opposed our farther progress, and we had to stone him out of our way. The elephant came on, and presently got the wind of where we had been lying. This at once seemed to awake his suspicions, for he stood still among the trees, stretching his trunk from side to side to catch the scent, and doubtful whether he should advance or retreat. We then ran towards him, and stalked in within forty yards of where he stood, and taking up a position behind a bush awaited his forward movement. The elephant came slowly forward, and I thought would pass to windward of us, when he suddenly altered his course, and walked boldly forward right for where we stood. He came on until within seven or eight yards, when I coughed loudly to turn him. He tossed up his trunk and turned quickly round to fly; as he turned, however, we fired together, when the elephant uttered a shrill cry of distress, and crashed away evidently hard hit. When this bull was standing before us, we both remarked that he was the finest we had seen that night: his tusks were extremely long, thick, and very unusually wide set.

We now returned to the fountain, and once more lay down to watch. Rhinoceroses, both black and white, were parad-

ing around us all night in every direction. We had lain but a short time when I detected a single old bull elephant approaching from the south by the same path which all the others had held. This elephant must have been very thirsty, for he came boldly on without any hesitation, and, keeping to windward, he walked past within about eight yards of us. We fired at the same moment; the elephant wheeled about, and after running a hundred yards reduced his pace to a slow walk. I clapped Carey on the shoulder, and said, "We have him." I had hardly uttered the words when he fell over on his side; he rose however again to his feet. At this moment the same presuming borelé who had troubled us in the early part of the night came up to us again, and, declining as before to depart by gentle hints, I thought it a fitting moment to put an end to his intrusion, and accordingly gave him a ball behind the shoulder. On receiving it he galloped off in tremendous consternation, and passed close under the dying elephant, who at the moment fell dead with a heavy crash, and broke one of his hind legs under him in the fall.

About an hour after two more elephants came towering on from the east. When they came up they stood for a long time motionless within forty yards of the water; and at length the finer of the two, which was a very first-rate old bull, and carrying immense tusks, walked boldly forward, and, passing round the north side of the fountain, com-

menced drinking on the rock just as the crippled bull had done. We both fired together, holding for his heart ; the bullets must have gone nearly through him, for we had double charges of powder in our weapons. On receiving the shots he dropped a volume of water from his trunk, and, tossing it aloft, uttered a loud cry and made off, steering north ; but before he was out of our sight he reduced his pace to a slow walk, and I could quite plainly hear, by the loud painful breathing through his trunk, that he was mortally wounded ; but whether the natives were too lazy to seek him, or having found him would not tell me, I know not, but I never got him. We shot another bull elephant shortly after this ; he too uttered a shrill cry, and went off holding the same course the last one did ; that was, however, all that I ever saw of him.

It was now wearing on towards morning : the moon was low and the sky was cloudy ; and feeling very sleepy, I set the two Bakalahari to watch whilst I lay down to rest. Carey was already enjoying a sound sleep, and snoring loudly. I had lain nearly an hour, and was neither waking nor sleeping, when the Bakalahari whispered "Clou toona, macoa," which signifies "Bull elephants, white man." I sat up on my kaross, and beheld three old bulls approaching from the west. At this moment there was a death-like calm in the atmosphere, and the sky looked very threatening all along the mountain range which bounds this favourite elephant district on the south-west. I

greatly feared a thunder-storm. Suddenly a breeze came whistling from the mountains, and gave these three elephants our wind. We then left the fountain and held to our waggons, where we slept till the sun rose.

When the sun rose I proceeded with the Bakalahari to inspect the spoors of the wounded elephants. I was struck with astonishment when I thought over our night's sport: nine times had first-rate old bull elephants come up to drink, and we had fired at eight of these at distances of from six to ten yards, with cool steady rests. Two of them lay dead beside the fountain; another had a broken leg, and could not escape; and the only one which we imagined had escaped was the bull with the wide-set tusks, which we both felt certain was wounded too far back in the body. The event, however, proved that our expectations were incorrect, for that afternoon we found this princely elephant lying dead very near our kraal. Both our shots were very far back, wounding him somewhere about the kidneys. We never saw anything of the four other elephants shot by us. The bull with the broken leg had gone nearly a mile from the fountain when we came up to him. At first he made vain attempts to escape, and then to charge; but finding he could neither escape nor catch any of us, he stood at bay beside a tree, and my after-riders began to assail him. It was curious to watch his movements as the boys, at about twenty yards distance, pelted him with sticks, &c. Each

thing as it was thrown he took up and hurled back at them. When, however, dry balls of elephants' dung were pitched at him, he contented himself with smelling at them with his trunk. At length, wishing to put an end to his existence, I gave him four shots behind the shoulder, when he at once exhibited signs of distress; water ran from his eyes, and he could barely keep them open; presently his gigantic form quivered, and, falling over, he expired. At night we again watched the fountain. Only one elephant appeared; late in the night he came up to leeward, and got our wind. I, however, shot two fine old mauchocho, or white rhinoceroses, and wounded two or three borelè, which were found by the natives.

On the 19th I proceeded with Carey and Piet, and a few Bakalahiri, to a small fountain lying one mile to the south: here we made two shooting-boxes of boughs of trees. There were three pools at which the game drank, the largest not being more than twelve feet in breadth. I and Carey at night shot one fine bull elephant and four rhinoceroses, wounding two others, which escaped. On the night following we also wounded two elephants, which got away.

The next night I put in practice a novel experiment I had long entertained—that of hunting elephants by moonlight with dogs and horses, as in the day, being very much annoyed at wounding and losing in the last week no less than ten first-rate old bull elephants. I commu-

nicated my idea to "Stick-in-the-mud," and we hastily proceeded to saddle my steed. I led my dogs, eight in number, through the forest to leeward of where a bull who had come to the fountain to drink had gone in, and when I saw that they had got his wind I slipped them. They dashed forward, and next minute I followed the baying of the dogs and the crash and the trumpet of the elephant. He rushed away at first without halting, and held right for the mountains to the south-west. When, however, he found that his speed did not avail, and that he could not get away from his pursuers, he began to turn and dodge about in the thickest of the cover, occasionally making charges after the dogs. I followed on as best I could, shouting with all my might to encourage my good hounds. These, hearing their master's voice beside them, stuck well by the elephant, and fought him better than in the day. I gave him my first two shots from the saddle; after which I rode close up to him, and, running in on foot, I gave him some deadly shots at distances of from fifteen to twenty yards.

The elephant very soon evinced signs of distress, and ceased to make away from us. Taking up positions in the densest parts of the cover, he caught up the red dust with his trunk, and, throwing it over his head and back, endeavoured to conceal himself in a cloud. This was a fine opportunity to pour in my deadly shafts, and I took care to avail myself of it. When he had received

about twelve shots he walked slowly forward in a dying state, the blood streaming from his trunk. I rode close up to him, and gave him a sharp right and left from the saddle: he turned and walked a few yards, then suddenly came down with tremendous violence on his vast stern, pitching his head and trunk aloft to a prodigious height, and, falling heavily over on his side, he expired. This was an extremely large and handsome elephant, decidedly the finest bull I had shot this year. Afraid of taking cold or rheumatism, for I was in a most profuse perspiration, I hastened back to my fireside, having first secured all the dogs in their couples. Here I divested myself of my leather trousers, shooting-belt, and veldt-schoens, and, stretched on my kaross, I took tea, and wondered at the facility with which I had captured this mighty elephant.

Feeling fatigued, I intended to lie down and rest till morning. Just, however, as I was arranging my saddles for a pillow, I beheld another first-rate old bull elephant advancing up the vley from the south. I at once resolved that he, too, should run the gauntlet with the dogs. In immense haste, therefore, I once more pulled on my old leathers, and buckled on my shooting-belt; and ran down into the rank long grass beside the fountain to meet him, armed with the large two-grooved rifle, having directed Carey and Piet to come slowly up with the dogs and my horse and gun as soon as they were ready.

The elephant came on, and stood drinking within thirty yards of me. When I saw Carey coming on with the dogs and steed I fired, but my rifle hung fire. The shot, however, gave the dogs good courage, and they fought well. The elephant took away at a rapid pace toward the other fountain where the Bechuanas lay, and at first led me through very bad wait-a-bit thorn cover, which once or twice nearly swept me out of the saddle. Presently he inclined to the west, and got into better country ; I then rode close to him, and bowled him over with four shots.

The next morning, my ammunition being expended, or very nearly so, I despatched Carey to camp for fresh supplies. When he was gone I walked through the forest, when I observed "Frochum" snuff up the wind and go ahead. I soon saw him returning, with two jackals trotting behind him, so I at once knew that there was some game lying dead in advance. When I had proceeded a little farther the dogs ran forward, and next moment a rush of many feet was heard charging towards where I stood. It was a troop of half-grown lions, with a lioness ; which dashed past me, followed by the dogs. They had been feasting on a white rhinoceros, shot by me two nights previously, which I found lying a little in advance. Beside the carcase stood a fine fat calf—the poor thing, no doubt, fancying that its mother slept ; heedless of lions, and all the other creatures that

had trodden there, it had remained beside its dead mother for a day and two nights. Rhinoceroses' calves always stick to their mothers long after they are dead. The next night I was again successful in a night-hunt, and bagged a very fine bull elephant. This wound up my elephant night-shooting for that moon, for next day there was a most awful thunder-storm, which filled the forest with large pools of water.

While reviewing my extraordinary good fortune during the last week's hunting, I could not help deeply regretting that I had not earlier thought of pursuing the elephants at night with dogs and horses : if I had commenced with the dogs only a week sooner, I might have bagged eight or ten first-rate bulls, which I knew were mortally wounded, but were, nevertheless, not forthcoming. The ivory of these elephants would have brought me in upwards of 200*l.* ; and it was vexing to think that many, if not all of them, were lying rotting in the surrounding forest. My only chance of finding them was by watching the vultures ; but these birds, knowing that they cannot break the skin of the larger game, preferred remaining above and around the Bechuanas, where the butchering was going briskly forward. They perched in groups upon the old branches of the larger trees, or darkened the sky in hundreds with their broad and shadowy wings.

While, however, I mourned the loss of these wounded elephants, I reckoned that I had been favoured with im-

mense good fortune in many instances during the past week. Ever intent upon embellishing and increasing my princely collection of African hunting trophies, I placed great value upon any specimen I happened to shoot which I thought worth adorning it. Thus I neglected my real interest; and instead of devoting my attention to rendering my expedition profitable, I allowed this very necessary part of the business to remain quite a secondary consideration. Thus, when I shot an ordinary bull elephant, I was accustomed to say to myself, "Ah! a good bull; tusks at least fifty pounds each; 4s. 6d. a pound; bring me in 22*l.* 10*s.* Capital day's work; help to pay for the two horses that died last week, or the four that are bitten with 'tsetse,' and must die in a week or two." But if, on the other hand, I shot an elephant with a pair of tusks of unusual size, perfection, or beauty, I at once devoted them to my collection, and valued them at a tenfold price. This, then, was one thing in which I reckoned I had been extremely fortunate—I had secured the finest tusks in all that nest of patriarchal old bulls which I had so sadly cut up in one short week, and which perhaps the summers of a century had seen roaming through these boundless forests in peaceful security.

The night-shooting being at an end, on the 23rd I retraced my steps to the dead elephants, to assist Carey in superintending the cutting out of the ivory, and in

escorting the same along with our supply of fat and flesh to the waggons. Early in the afternoon we had got all ready for a start. The Bechuana captains who were there, and had appropriated my elephants and rhinoceroses, and nearly all the fat, then brought up about fifty men, who shouldered my impedimenta, and we marched for camp. Carey went in front, I rode in the middle, and my after-riders brought up the rear. This long line of naked savages threading the mazes of the forest, and bearing home the spoils of a few days' hunting, formed a truly interesting and unusual picture. Every man that was there carried something of mine: some led the dogs, some carried the guns and extra ammunition, some cooking-vessels, axes, sickles, water-calibashes, provisions, rhinoceroses' horns, the elephant's teeth, and an immense supply of flesh and fat, &c. &c. We made the Limpopo as the sun went down, which we crossed all right, and brought everything safe to camp. I made other excursions from this encampment in quest of elephants, in which I was very successful; but as they did not differ in their details from the many already described, I shall not run the risk of wearying my reader with an account of them.

On the 30th one of those minor accidents occurred which the hunter in these parts must be prepared continually to encounter. As I awoke that morning I heard a scream which denoted that "Prince," a most worthless

dog, was consumed by a crocodile. There were several of these terrible animals frequenting the still deep stream beside which we lay. They seemed ever to be on the look-out for prey, and I have not the slightest doubt they would have taken one of us if we had ventured in.

On the 2nd of October, in the morning, we packed the cap-tent waggon, and stowed carefully away in grass my favourite tusks, which I intended to keep as specimens.

The next afternoon, whilst making for the fountain called Setoque, accompanied by Kapain and a party from Bamangwato, I observed a number of crows and vultures, and came across the spoor of a party of Bakalahari. I at once felt convinced that one of my wounded elephants lay rotting near me, but, the sun being nearly under, I did not then wait, resolving to seek it at another time; Kapain promised to send two of his companions early next morning to see if I had not surmised correctly. These men next day arrived, bearing some putrid fat which they had got from the Bakalahari; and I at once said, "Oh, you have found my dead elephant?" They answered, "Yes, but the tusks are stolen." They also said that they had not seen any others of their tribe, but that they had cut that fat out of the elephant. Kapain then promised me to do his best to recover the ivory for me; but I found out, very soon afterwards, that

he was playing me false. Next day I shot an old bull elephant.

On the 5th I began to think of hunting no more across the Limpopo, as the season of rain was up ; and any day I might come to the river, returning from hunting, and find myself cut off from camp by a mighty stream, which would probably remain impassable for months. I also wished to save, if possible, one or two of my horses from the "tsetse," as my stud was now reduced to five. I therefore resolved to return at once to camp, and cross the Limpopo no more. After an early breakfast I marched thither, with thirteen Bechuanas bearing the tusks, flesh, &c.

On my way I visited the remains of the elephant which Kapain's men had found ; it was the carcase of an enormous old bull, no doubt the elephant which I had first shot on the night of the 16th of last month, for I had followed his spoor to within half a mile of the spot. His tusks were stolen as reported ; they had not been cut out, but drawn. The skull remained perfect, and was finely cleaned by hyænas, vultures, and insects. On beholding the carcase, I at once knew that Kapain had lied in saying that his men had cut the fat I saw with them out of the elephant, for it was evident that all flesh and fat had been at an end many days previously : the tusks, however, had quite lately been drawn, perhaps on the preceding day. I felt quite certain that Kapain was deceiving me,

so I at once charged him with falsehood, and resolved in my own mind to take some very strong measures for the recovery of the tusks. I suspected that a tribe of Bakalahari who lived not far from the elephant, upon the river, knew all about the tusks, for there were no other natives in that district ; so I resolved to ride to the village early next morn, and threaten to shoot the chief if the teeth did not quickly appear.

Accordingly, on the morning of the 6th, before it was clear, four steeds were saddled ; and having taken coffee, I crossed the Limpopo, accompanied by Carey, John, and Piet, bearing double-barrelled guns, and held down the river-side for the Bakalahari village, which we made in about an hour. As soon as I observed the houses I dashed across their corn-lands at a racing pace, and was standing in the middle of the natives before they were aware of my approach.

The chief whom I wanted sat in the forum with most of his men, so, dismounting from my horse, I walked up to them, and sat down on the ground in native custom, and, taking snuff myself, I handed it round. While I was doing this, John and Carey, armed, occupied the two places of exit from the forum. I sat silent for a little, and then said, "My heart is very bitter with the chief of this village. You were hungry, and I killed much flesh and fat for you. I told you that many of my elephants were lying dead, and that I wanted their teeth. You

promised me to watch the vultures, and bring me the teeth. I have traced your spoor home from one of these elephants. Why did the tusks not come to my waggons? I do not want to shed your blood, but I require the teeth to be laid immediately before me."

They all immediately exclaimed, "The teeth are forthcoming, they are forthcoming: wait a little, chief of the white men. We saw the vultures, and hid the teeth for you." I was delighted to hear this, but I pretended still to be very angry, and answered, "My heart is still very bitter, for you should have brought the teeth at once to me, and not caused me to come with guns to seek my teeth." The chief then at once despatched five or six active men to bring the teeth; and Bechuana beer and porridge were placed before me. In an hour the men returned, bearing the tusks of my lost elephant. I was right glad to see them; they were immense teeth, and very finely arched, and almost perfect. I then chose some skins of koodoo and blue wildebeests out of their kraals for packing my ivory in the waggons, for which I promised them beads; after which I returned to camp, the natives going before me, bearing the teeth and skins. These men had drawn the tusks, and concealed them somewhere close to the carcase of the elephant. Here they would most probably have been concealed until I had left the country, when they would have forwarded them to their chief. Just as we reached the

drift we met a string of natives returning from my last elephant, bearing flesh and fat. This was a fine opportunity for a seizure. I selected several large bundles of the flesh and some fat, and marched the same to camp on the shoulders of the Bakalahari, along with the ivory. When Kapain saw us arrive at camp, he was utterly confounded, and began to abuse the Bakalahari; thereupon I bundled him out of the kraal. In the afternoon we packed the ivory in the baggage-waggon; it had hitherto lain loose in the kraal. There were fifty-three tusks of bull, and seventeen tusks of cow elephants. Three pairs of these bulls' teeth I intended to keep in my collection; in the cap-tent waggon were seven pairs of picked bulls' tusks, and two pairs of cow-elephants' tusks: all of which I likewise devoted to my collection.

CHAPTER XXIX.

We march up the Limpopo — The Guapa Mountains — Immense variety of Game — Stalk and shoot two Sable Antelopes — Several Hounds lost — Romantic Ravine in the Guapa Mountains — My Forest Home — Buck Koodoos — Stalking Sable Antelopes — Two of my Horses die from Tsetse — Continue our March — Countless Herds of Game.

On the morning of the 8th of October we packed the waggons, and about midday inspanned, and left the Bakalahari village, where we had lain for nearly six weeks. The old chief of these Bakalahari looked extremely downhearted when he saw us preparing to depart; and could hardly refrain from crying. I had come there and found them starving; but ever since my arrival they had had more good flesh and fat than they could eat. I had also employed the women to stamp my barley and Bechuana corn, and had always rewarded them liberally with beads, which they made into native ornaments, and with which they adorned their persons. The old chief was distinguished by a snake-skin, which he wore round his head. I gave him some presents at parting, and we then trekked, holding up the river, but at a considerable distance from it, the Limpopo

having at this part a very considerable bend. In the evening we came again upon the river, and halted at our old kraal, where I had been troubled with lions on the 5th of August. On the march I lost "Argyll," my best dog, of whom I have often made mention in former expeditions, he having weathered my two campaigns in the Bamangwato country. He was strangled on the trap of the waggon, where he was coupled along with the other dogs. I now resolved to leave the Limpopo, and explore the country in a north-westerly direction. I was accompanied by a large body of Sicomy's men. These scoundrels would not give me any information either as to water or elephants, excepting in one direction which suited themselves, invariably answering my questions with, "There is no water in that direction; there are no elephants there." Thus I was left entirely in the dark how to proceed, and was obliged to use my own discretion. About due north-west from where we lay, a bold mountain range rose blue above the forest. Thither in the morning I directed our course, and in the evening we halted at a small vley, which I found by following an elephant footpath; the rascally Bechuanas swearing that we should not find water till sundown next day. On the march we started an ostrich from her nest, in which we found sixteen large serviceable eggs. The country through which we passed was very soft and sandy, the forest often so dense as to compel us to halt and use our axes.

On the 13th we reached a strong succession of fountains, forming a running stream of pure water. Here the country became extremely beautiful; a very wide and finely wooded valley stretched away into the bosom of the mountains, ending in a bold ravine. This district I discovered to be the abode of a considerable tribe called "Moroking." Their cultivated corn-lands stretched away on every side of the fountain. Here I outspanned, and presently the chief and all his people came to me, highly pleased that I had visited them. These men were dependents of Sicomy, and, for some reason which I could not comprehend, had been instructed by the Bamangwato natives not to give me any information regarding the elephants or the waters in advance. At night we were visited by a terrible and long-protracted thunder-storm, and much rain fell, rendering the country very unfit for trekking.

The next morning I shot a large wild goose, a splendid bird, its general colour dark glossy green, with white patches on its sides and beneath its wings. While seeking for wild fowl along the edge of the stream I almost trod upon the tail of a fearful "cobra," which instantly reared its head on high and spread its neck out like the Indian cobra. Before it could strike, however, I sprang to one side, and escaped its deadly fangs; Ruyter and I then slew him with sticks and stones. The chief of the "Moroking," and all his people, both

men and women, came again to see the white man, the waggons, and the oxen ; they still persisted in saying that there were no elephants in advance. As the country was now quite unfit for trekking, and probably I might not find elephants until I had proceeded to a great distance, I resolved to turn back. Accordingly, after breakfast we trekked, and halted for the night at the fountain we had left on the preceding day. On the march I shot an extremely beautiful wood-pigeon ; its back and tail were grass-green, its thighs bright orange, its bill and feet bright coral red.

On the 15th at sunrise we inspanned, and held on until late in the afternoon, steering for the mountain of Guapa, where I had seen sable antelope on the 16th of July. We halted for the night without water ; during the night rain fell. On the march we saw spoor of eland ; my troop of dogs took away after a herd of zebras, one of which broke Filbert's shoulder with a kick, so I was obliged to shoot him. This was a sad loss to me ; Filbert was the best dog I had left.

Next day at dawn we marched, holding for a vley close under the blue mountain in advance. Having proceeded some miles we fell in with springboks, zebras, blue gnoos ; and, soon after, to my surprise, an old bull kookama or oryx, carrying a superb pair of horns, started away before the waggons. My dogs were fresh and hungry : they were instantly slipped, and dashed forward on the scent of

the oryx. Unluckily, a wild dog sprang up right in their path, to which they at once gave chase, and thus I lost this most splendid antelope.

I walked ahead of the waggons with my rifle, and soon started two pairs of ostriches. I was going down wind, and kept starting the game. I next sent away a herd of zebras and brindled gnoos; next a sounder of wild boar; next a troop of giraffes; and, close to the vley where I intended to halt, I wounded a koodoo, which left a bloody spoor, that I did not choose to follow. The vley to which I had been trusting proved dry. We outspanned here for an hour, however, and then held round the western extremity of this fine mountain-range; and as the sun went down I halted my waggons on its south side, opposite the mouth of a bold and well-wooded ravine, which contained a strong fountain. On the march I rode ahead of my waggons on the spoor of two old bull buffaloes, which our waggon-whips had started; these had gone out of my course, so I did not follow far. Returning, I came to a black rhinoceros, which I wounded, but did not get. As I neared the ravine where I intended to halt, I stalked in close upon a second black rhinoceros, which on receiving two deadly shots charged madly forward and subsided in the dust. A few minutes after firing at Borèlé I was following a troop of pallahs close under the green rocky mountain, when, lo! a herd of the lovely sable antelope caught my

attention. These were quietly browsing on a shoulder of the mountain among the green trees far, far above me. I instantly threw off my leathers, and proceeded to stalk in upon them. An old doe detected me, however, and, instantly sounding the alarm, the herd, which consisted of eight—three coal-black bucks and five does—dashed off, and took through a wild rocky ravine.

As it was too late in the day to follow them farther, I turned my face towards my horses, which I had left at the base of the mountain ; and straining my eyes along the level forest beneath me to seek my waggons, which were now due, I detected them far out from the mountain, steering to go past the fountain. I then fired a signal shot, which brought them up. This unlucky shot started away two bull elephants which were feeding in the thorn cover close beneath me. I drew up my waggons in an open spot more than half a mile from the fountain, wait-a-bit thorns forbidding our nearer approach.

The 17th was a very cool and cloudy day ; I took an early breakfast, and then held north-east, close in under the mountain-range, accompanied by Kapain and a party of Bakalahari, to seek elephants.

We fell in with immense herds of zebras and buffaloes numbering between three and five hundred in each herd, and towards evening with a numerous herd of elephants, when I killed one of the finest after an easy chase.

After several unsuccessful stalks for sable antelope I at length met with the success my perseverance deserved. Returning in the afternoon of the 20th homewards, I suddenly observed a herd of about ten of them in thick cover on the mountain's ridge. I commenced ascending the rugged acclivity as fast as I could, for the daylight would be gone in a very short time. When I got within two hundred yards of them, I found it almost impossible to get in any nearer, for I must cross a stony flat in sight of several of the ever-wary does ; it was, moreover, now so late that I could not well see the sights of my rifle. I had almost resolved not to disturb them, and to return to camp : on second thoughts, however, I resolved to give it a trial. I made a successful stalk, and crossed this dangerous rocky flat unobserved. There was no moss nor heather under my knees, but a mass of sharp adamantine fragments of rock, yet this I did not heed.

Having crossed the flat, I soon stalked within shot, when, raising my rifle slowly, I fired at a lovely old doe which stood on my left. The ball passed right through her a little behind the shoulder ; she bounded down hill, when I fired my second barrel at her, but, owing to the darkness, I missed. The potaquinians above me, seeing nothing and smelling nothing, stood bewildered until I had reloaded, lying on my side. I then shot another splendid doe with a perfect pair of wide-set horns, putting

two bullets through her fore-quarters. She, however, took two more balls before she lay, when I put a fifth bullet into her to stop her kicking, as she was injuring her horns on the rocky ground. By this time the sun was under and the moon shone bright. Highly gratified at my success, I now cut off this magnificent antelope's head, and descended the mountain with a slow and careful step. The other potaquinine did not leave the ground, and I got her also next day.

I now reckoned my collection of African trophies as almost perfect. Last year I shot an old buck potaquinine in the Bamangwato country, which I had carefully preserved; and I had now shot two splendid does, which was what I most particularly required to complete my collection. I still wanted heads of the "bluebuck," or "kleenbok," "Vaal rheebok," "ourebi," and "reitbok;" but these were abundant in the colony, and were not hard to get.

Next morning I ascended the mountain to secure the flesh of the dead potaquinine and to secure the wounded one. I found her still alive, and on seeing me she made off; I, however, followed her up, and, making a correct stalk barefooted, I shot her where she stood; she proved a very old doe.

The 23rd was a very cool and cloudy morning, and looked likely for light rain. At an early hour I left my waggons with some provisions, and ascended the mountain

to the north-east to seek sable antelope. Soon after gaining the upper heights of the mountain I had the satisfaction to detect a fine herd of these feeding among the trees on the table summit of a ridge of the mountain, which stretched away to the east. I determined to stalk them in true Highland fashion, and to use my very best endeavours to ensure success; accordingly, having surveyed the ground, I made a cast to leeward, and approached the herd upon my belly. When I got within two hundred yards of them I found it was impossible to approach nearer on that side, so I was obliged to creep away back again, and try to come upon them from another quarter. When next I crept in the herd had vanished, and I could not find them for some time. At length, however, I came suddenly upon them, when the herd rushed in a semicircle round me. I ran forward as hard as I could, and, pulling suddenly up, fired at the big black buck as he dashed past me at top speed; the ball told loudly, and the buck bent up his back to the shot.

They now charged for the southern ridge of the mountain, and disappeared over it at a tremendous pace. I quickly loaded, and proceeded to take up the spoor, and at once had the satisfaction to find great spouts of blood all along the spoor of the patriarchal old black buck. This gave me high hopes of success; I waited a few minutes, and whistled for the Bechuanas, who imme-

diately came up to me with "Bles" and "Affriar," two right good dogs. When the wounded buck had proceeded a short distance down the mountain's face, he left the herd and slanted away by himself. In a few minutes, however, I espied him: he stood about three hundred yards from me, under a low tree on the rocky mountain side, with drooping head and outstretched tail, which he kept constantly whisking from side to side, and he was evidently extremely sick. As he exhibited no intention of going farther, and as the waggons were near, I thought it would be a fine opportunity to give all the dogs blood; so I despatched Ruyter to camp to fetch them, and I remained stationary and watched the wounded potaquin. After standing in one spot for some time, he made a few tottering steps, then lay heavily down in the grass as if dead, and nothing was visible but his side.

This was most satisfactory: there, on the side of his native rugged mountain, lay the ever-wary, the scarce, the lovely, long-sought sable antelope, and a most noble specimen—perhaps the finest buck in all the district. His ever-watchful eye was now sunk in the long grass; and as he was lying beside a little ravine, and a stiff breeze was blowing, I could, if I had chosen, have crept in within thirty yards of him, and shot him dead on the spot; but so far from doing this, I rather lamented that he was thus badly wounded, for I feared that he would

not have life enough left to show a good fight when the dogs came up. It has been truly said that there is many a slip between the cup and the lip, and the truth of this old saying I was about most bitterly to experience. In half an hour the Bushman came on with three Bechuanas, leading all my best dogs. I went up to the potaquaine. He had arisen, and was looking at us as we came on ; when I approached within a hundred and fifty yards of him he disappeared over the ridge. I did not, however, slip the trustless dogs until they should be on his scent or see him. When I gained the ridge I again beheld him standing within a hundred yards of me. I now slipped all my trustiest hounds; they ran forward towards the buck, and then took away up the hill, where, finding nothing, they presently came down again, and, after snuffing about for a little, followed up the scent of the buck.

All this time the potaquaine remained utterly motionless, regarding the dogs with a wicked eye. They, however, did not observe him until they were within about ten yards of him, when he stamped his foot, and turned as if to fight with them. The dogs opened a bay, and the next instant the potaquaine bounded through the middle of them, and, holding down the mountain side, was out of my sight in two seconds, the dogs all at his heels.

I pressed forward in the most perfect confidence of an immediate bay ; but when I obtained a view of the

open forest around the mountain's base, nor dog nor potaquinne could I see ; neither could I hear a sound. I thought the chase must have led up wind, so I held on at my best pace along the rugged mountain's side.

I gained shoulder after shoulder, and opened fresh ground, but nothing living could I see, nor could I hear a sound. To make matters worse, it was blowing half a gale of wind. Most thoroughly confounded, I now in haste retraced my steps to the natives. These useless creatures I found sitting just where I had slipped the dogs. In vain I asked them whither they were gone ; they only put me wrong, and lost me the day ; for they declared that they had watched the ground below to leeward, and that no dog had gone in that course. They had, however, gone that way, and were at that moment baying a fresh buck very near me, but the unlucky wind prevented me from hearing them. I hastily retraced my steps once more up wind, and, after proceeding a little farther than I had been before, I saw "Alert," a very uncertain animal which I had long possessed, returning towards me.

The dogs have then gone up wind, I thought to myself, and they have the buck at bay in advance. Next moment, however, to my utter amazement, I beheld my wounded potaquinne standing in the forest below me, and not a single dog near him. I was now aware that my dogs had fallen in with some other bucks which I was not aware of,

and were gone I knew not whither. After waiting an hour for them, I endeavoured to stalk in on the potaquaine ; it was bad ground, and he saw me and made off. He went but a short distance, however, and stood again in a drooping attitude beneath a tree ; the Bechuanas tried to drive him to a position which I took up, when he left the ground, and I never saw him again.

When I returned to my camp, my people told me that the dogs had bayed a buck for a long time under the mountain, within hearing of the waggons, and that the sounds had died away, as if they had pulled him down and killed him. On hearing this I at once saddled up two steeds, and rode in that direction to seek my dogs, but saw nothing of them, and, night setting in, I returned to camp. Next day three of the dogs returned ; they were covered with the blood of the potaquaine they had killed, and one of them was wounded by his horns. I, however, never found the remains of either this buck or the one I had shot, nor did I see more of my three good dogs which were missing ; no doubt they had all been found by the natives, and stolen by them.

I resolved on the 26th to make an expedition on foot across the mountain, and hunt in its northern limits for a few days. I accordingly started with Ruyter and four Bechuanas, bearing my bedding, pots, water, and other impedimenta. Having ascended to the upper heights of the mountain, I crossed to its western ridges, and held for its

northern limits ; and when the sun went down I halted beneath a green tree, where I slept.

I made my coffee by moonlight before the day dawned ; and when it was clear I stalked along the upper ridges of the mountain. Presently, peeping over a rocky and well-wooded ridge, I met a small troop of doe koodoos, one of which I shot for food. Immediately below where this koodoo fell was a lonely kraal of Bakalahari. These men had chosen for their place of residence a wild and most romantic ravine which here parted the mountain for a distance of about a mile, forming a deep and almost impassable gulf. At the upper end of this ravine was a most delicious fountain, forming a strong running stream, which wound along the shady depths of this wild and most secluded spot. When these Bakalahari heard the report of my rifle echoing through their valley, they left their pots upon their fires, and fled to a man. My Bechuanas, however, eventually got them to come back again, and they cut up for me my koodoo, and carried the flesh to a shady tree on the table summit of this tabular range, immediately above the strong fountain in the gulf beneath me.

This spot I had selected to be my forest home for a short time ; and here I spent some merry days, and feasted like a prince on fat venison, marrow-bones, Bechuana corn, Bechuana beer, tea, coffee, biscuit, &c. I was also provided with a rich dessert consisting of a delicious African fruit called "moopooroo," which was now ripe and extremely

abundant throughout this range. This fine fruit grows on a tree with a very dark green leaf; the fruit is the size and shape of a large olive, and when ripe is bright orange. In the afternoon I went out with Ruyter, and found four buck koodoos on the northern ridge of the mountain. I wounded one of these, and followed up his bloody spoor, and, coming on him in cover on the mountain side, I broke his fore-leg with a second shot; he, however, took away down to the level forest beneath, and there I lost him.

At earliest dawn next day I held down wind with Ruyter, and presently found the fresh spoor of a herd of sable antelope which had got my wind, and were off. I then inclined my steps in the direction in which their spoor led, and presently we observed them among the trees within three hundred yards of us, some lying and some standing. One of the old does soon observed us. We sat gently down in the grass, however, and I crept away back, and made a very fine stalk upon the herd in very difficult ground. I was obliged to do a hundred and fifty yards of it on my breast. A wary old doe kept sentry, and prevented my approaching within a hundred yards. I therefore took this doe, and shot her with a bullet in the shoulder. I then sent Ruyter for the natives and at once despatched the head to camp to be stuffed.

In the evening I fell in again with this same troop of potaquaines on the northern range of the mountain. They heard me coming on before I was aware of them, and held

up wind over very rocky ground and through thick cover. I followed on in their wake like an old staghound, keeping close to them, and always halting when they halted ; thus they did not observe me, and at last I got close in upon them. I could then have had a fine shot at several of the does, but I wanted the old black buck. I aimed for his heart, but an unlucky branch intervened, and, altering the line of my ball, lost me this most noble animal. I, however, fired a snap shot at him with my left barrel, and sent a bullet through his flank. The herd then dashed down the mountain side, making a tremendous rumpus among the loose masses of rock, the old buck leaving a bloody spoor. I did not disturb them further then, the sun being under, but returned to my home beneath the greenwood tree.

I followed the old buck up next day, but without success, and on the 31st I determined to return to my waggons. Accordingly, at dawn of day I rolled up my bedding, and, directing my Bechuanas to go and call Bakalahari to carry my flesh and impedimenta to camp, I held a south-westerly course across the mountains with Ruyter and a Bechuana boy. This morning richly repaid me for all my toil and exertions in following the sable antelope throughout these stony and rugged mountains. Having proceeded about a mile down wind, on looking over a height which commanded a fine view of well-wooded undulating table-land below me, I had the sincere pleasure to behold a beautiful herd

of sable antelopes feeding quietly up wind within a quarter of a mile of me. The herd consisted of seven does and one coal-black magnificent old buck. Even at the distance at which they then were, I could very plainly see that this buck was a most superb specimen ; his horns seemed almost too large for him, and swept back over his shoulders with a determined and perfect curve.

I sat some time to watch their movements, and gazed upon them with intense delight. The ground on which they were feeding being very level, and observing that the does were extremely wary, I thought the best way to stalk them would be to cut in before them to windward, as they were proceeding in that direction, taking care of course to keep out of their way sufficiently far to ensure their not getting my wind. I then crept back from the ridge where I had observed them, and, describing a semi-circle, crept in on my knees through the large rough stones. The does came freshly on, and inclined their course to the spot where I lay flat on my belly awaiting their forward movement. They continued to approach until one fine old doe was within range of my rifle. When, however, they had come thus far, they seemed all at once to change their minds, and after feeding about for a few minutes they took another tack and altered their course from east to north. I then divested myself of my shoes and shooting-belt, and commenced following them up.

Presently, however, I observed a wary old doe, which

had fed away among the trees apart from her comrades, standing looking at me. My position was a very awkward one; but I dared not alter it, as this would have lost me the day, so I remained motionless as the rocks over which I crept, and presently her patience was exhausted, and she ceased to suspect me, and held on to her comrades. I now made up my mind that it was impossible to do anything with them where they then were, and that it would be best to watch them from a distance until they should move into some more uneven ground, where a stalker would have some chance with them.

Having thus resolved, I beat a retreat, and returned to the ridge above, where I had at first made them out. Here I again sat, and with a longing heart watched the movements of these loveliest of Afric's lovely antelopes. I was struck with admiration at the magnificence of the noble old black buck, and I vowed in my heart to slay him, although I should follow him for a twelvemonth. The old fellow seemed very fidgety in his movements, and while the does fed steadily on he lagged far behind, occasionally taking a mouthful of grass, and then standing for a few minutes under the trees, rubbing his huge, knotted, scimitar-shaped horns upon their branches. At length the does had fed away a hundred and fifty yards from him, and he still lagged behind. This was the golden moment to make a rapid stalk in upon him, while his ever-watchful sentinels were absent. I saw my chance, and

stole rapidly down the rocky hill-side and gained the level on which the herd were pasturing. He was now obscured from my view by the bushy dwarfish trees which adorned the ground; the next move was to get my eye upon him before he should observe me: I stole stealthily forward and detected him. He was still feeding very slowly on after the does, and seemed quite unsuspecting. I then instantly cast off my shoes and shooting-belt, and, watching the lowering of his noble horns, my eye fixed tiger-like upon him, stalked rapidly in. My heart beat with anxiety as I advanced, and was almost within shot; twenty yards nearer and I would fire. Again he lowered his head to crop the young grass; I seized the moment, and the twenty yards were won.

Here was a young tree with a fork, from which I had resolved to fire. The potaquine stood with his round stern right to me. I took a deadly aim and fired: the ball entered very near his tail, and passing through the length of his vitals rested in his breast. He staggered about for a second, and then, bounding forward about sixty yards, he halted, and looked back to see from whence the deadly shaft had sped that had thus so unceremoniously disturbed his morning meal. The sights of my rifle were still fixed upon him, and just as he pulled up and exposed to me his full broadside a second bullet left the ringing steel, and crashed through the very centre of the old fellow's shoulder.

On receiving this second shot the sable antelope wheeled about and held after the does, and I knew from his movement, though his pace was good, that he had got the ball in his shoulder and could not go very far. I then walked leisurely back to seek my shoes and shooting-belt, and, having found them, I was loading my rifle, when the Bushman, who had been watching my stalk from the height above, joined me, and said that the buck had run but a short distance, and had lain down under a tree. I stole carefully forward and immediately observed him lying as if still alive, his noble head not laid on the ground, but in an upright posture. Fancying him still alive, and having too often been tricked with wounded antelopes, I then gave him a third bullet, but the dark form of this lovely habitant of the mountain quailed not to the shot; the spirit of the sable antelope had fled. I was transported with delight when I came up and saw the surpassing beauty and magnificence of the invaluable trophy I had won. This potaquaine was very old, and his horns were enormous, fair set, perfect, and exquisitely beautiful. I cut off his head, and, leaving men to convey the flesh to camp, I held thither in advance, escorting my hard-won trophy. On my way to camp, coming down the footpath from the fountain, to my dejection I found the untameable Mazeppa stretched to rise no more, and half consumed by hyænas and vultures; he had died of horse-sickness. The

reduction of my stock by the fell hand of death during this week was, alas ! not confined to Mazeppa only ; the pony I bought of my cousin Colonel Campbell died of "tsetse," a valuable fore-ox died of some severe sickness, and "Fox," a very good dog, died of the African distemper ; three of my very best dogs had also mysteriously disappeared the day they chased the pota-quaine.

We remained in the neighbourhood frequented by the sable antelope for several days longer, but I did not succeed in killing another, although with other game of every kind I met with great success.

CHAPTER XXX.

Leave the Potoquaine Country — Absurd Ceremony — My Cattle fail me — Send to the Missionary Station for Aid — Encamp near the Limpopo — Indescribable Fish — A young Secretary — Nearly all my Oxen die — Assistance arrives from Mr. Livingstone — We reach the Residence of Sichely — A Hunter's Monument — We continue our March through a beautiful Country — An Adventure with two savage Lionesses — A violent Tempest — Mahura — Bakalahari driving Game towards their Pitfalls — We cross the Orange River and reach Colesberg.

On the 15th of November we inspanned, and left the mountains of Linguapa. Kapain and his Bechuanas held for Bamangwato; Seleka's Bechuanas held for their chief; and we held a south-westerly course for the Limpopo, which we reached in less than three hours.

Next day we trekked at dawn, and having marched a few miles we were joined by Bakalahari, who reported having seen elephants on the preceding day. A little after this I shot a waterbuck close to the river, when I outspanned.

During the day "Matsaca," chief of the Bamalette, visited me with a retinue: he brought a kaross for me, for which I was to cut him on the arm and shoulder and anoint him with medicine to make him shoot well with the gun which he had bought of me. In the even-

ing I walked a short distance down the river's bank, and shot a lovely fawn of the serolomootlooque, and a buck pallah with a very handsome head.

On the 17th I went in quest of elephants, accompanied by the Bamalette men. We continued along the bank of the river for several miles, when we took up the spoor of three or four enormous old bulls. On our way I wounded a white rhinoceros, which I did not follow to secure. The elephants had fed very slowly away from the river, and before we had followed the spoor an hour we were close upon them. The Bechuanas chose to leave the spoor, and making a cast to windward they started the elephants. My dogs being much distressed with the sun, and I not being aware that the game were started, we at this very moment unfortunately sat down and rested for half an hour, which of course lost me the day. When I discovered that the elephants had moved off, I turned my face for camp, and before proceeding far I started an ostrich off her nest; the nest contained twenty eggs, which I directed the Bechuanas to bring to camp.

As we held up the side of the river I detected a very fine old black rhinoceros standing among some wait-a-bit thorn. Directing Piet, my dismounted after-rider (for my stud of fifteen was now reduced to one), to watch my movements, I commenced a stalk upon Borèlé, and, having got within about sixty yards of where he stood in dense cover, I signed to Piet to get on the other side and

start him towards me ; this plan succeeded, for he charged out of the cover, and, holding for the bush behind which I was concealed, he passed within twelve yards. My first shot was a very deadly one. It set him charging round and round in a circle, when I gave him a second, and he made off mortally wounded. I then ran to my little mare, and, mounting her, I gave him chase, and presently dropped him with a shot behind the shoulder. Loud thunder was rumbling to windward of my camp, so I hastened to cut off Borèlé's horn, after which I rode home.

In the course of the day I saw the fresh spoor of about twenty varieties of large game, and most of the animals themselves, viz. elephant, black, white, and long-horned rhinoceros, hippopotamus, camelopard, buffalo, blue wildebeest, zebra, waterbuck, sassayby, koodoo, pallah, springbok, serolomootlooque, wild boar, duiker, steinbok, lion, leopard. This district of Africa contains a larger variety of game than any other in the whole of this vast tract of the globe, and perhaps more than any district throughout the world ; for besides the game which I have just noted, the following are not uncommon, viz. keilton, or two-horned black rhinoceros, eland, oryx, roan antelope, sable antelope, hartebeest, klipspringer, and gryns steinbuck : the rietbuck is also to be found, but not abundantly.

We inspanned on the 18th before it was day, and trekked

up the Limpopo for about three hours. In the forenoon Matsaca arrived from the carcass of the borèlé : he brought with him a very fine leopard's skin kaross, and an elephant's tooth ; these were for me, in return for which I was to cut him to make him shoot well. This I did in the following manner : opening a large book of natural history, containing prints of all the chief quadrupeds, I placed his forefinger successively on several of the prints of the commonest of the South African quadrupeds, and as I placed his finger on each I repeated some absurd sentence and anointed him with turpentine. When this was accomplished I made four cuts on his arm with a lancet, and then, anointing the bleeding wounds with gunpowder and turpentine, I told him that his gun had power over each of the animals which his finger had touched, provided he held it straight. Matsaca and his retinue seemed highly gratified, and presently took leave and departed : I afterwards trekked up the river till sundown.

On the succeeding day we marched with the dawn, and held up the river. In the forenoon Bechuanas from Seleka visited me, bearing a tooth of a bull-elephant, for which they wanted a gun ; the tooth, however, being small, I would not give them one for it, although I might have done so at a fair profit. I found the game extremely abundant, counting no less than twenty-two rhinoceroses, nine of which were in one herd, feeding on the open plain. The wind was as foul as it could blow,

and kept continually starting the game. At length, late in the afternoon, I got within shot of four white rhinoceroses. The old bull stood next to me, so, resting my six-pound rifle on the trunk of a tree which an elephant had overthrown, I took him on the shoulder and smashed his forearm; he ran for thirty yards, and then rolled over on his back. He however regained his legs and ran a hundred yards farther, when his leg failed him, and coming up on his spoor I finished him in a few minutes. The waggons now came up, and I halted them on the river's bank, opposite to the rhinoceros.

On the 21st much rain fell throughout the day, rendering the country unfit for trekking. A birth and a death occurred among my cattle. In the afternoon a loud rushing noise was heard coming on like a hurricane: this was a large troop of pallah pursued by a pack of about twenty wild dogs; they passed our camp in fine style within a hundred yards of us, and in two minutes the wild dogs had caught two of the pallahs, which my Bechuanas ran up and secured. A pallah in passing my camp cleared a distance of fifty feet in two successive bounds, and this on unfavourable ground, it being very soft and slippery.

I left the sable antelopes' mountain mainly in consequence of a general falling off amongst my cattle. I did not then know to what cause to attribute this sad and to me all-important change in their condition, which only a

few weeks before had been a source of admiration to us. Alas! it was now too evident that nearly all of them were dying, having been bitten by the fly "tsetse" at the mountain. The rains of the last three days had made this melancholy truth more strongly manifest; the cattle presented a most woful appearance. Listless and powerless, they cared not to feed, and, though the grass covered the country with the richest and most luxuriant pasturage, their sides remained hollow, and their whole bodies became daily more emaciated; the eyes also of many of them were closed and swollen. The next morning being fair, I inspanned, although the country was very unfit for trekking; my heavily laden waggons sinking deep in the soft rich soil which lies along the banks of the Limpopo. My poor oxen, as I expected, became knocked up on the march before they had proceeded three miles, many of them lying down and refusing to proceed farther, or even to stand up. I was obliged in consequence to outspan one waggon and leave it behind, and to bring on the other waggon with the able oxen, and then send them back to assist their dying comrades in bringing up the second. I performed a short march, and halted on a fine open sandy spot, where I made a strong thorn kraal for the cattle. Soon after we had outspanned the second waggon heavy rain set in, which continued at intervals throughout the night.

Light rains continued to fall throughout the 24th. I

however performed a short march, and brought my waggons a few miles farther up the Limpopo. I was obliged, as on the last march, to bring on one waggon at a time.

Heavy rains fell at intervals throughout the next day. "Ronoberg," a Natal ox, died during the night, and it was evident that many more would die in a few days; even now the half of them were utterly unfit to work. The heavy and continued rains which had lately set in made me feel my heavy misfortune with increased severity, for the country was hardly to be travelled with such loads as mine, even with oxen in good working condition. At length I found myself reduced to a stand, or the next thing to it. In this state of things I deemed it necessary to despatch natives to the nearest missionary station for assistance. I accordingly wrote a letter to Mr. Livingstone, the resident missionary at Sichely's, requesting the loan of two spans of oxen, and, having sealed up my epistle in a bottle, I sent it off with two natives, instructing them to use all possible speed. One of these men was a native in my service, named "Ramachumey;" the other was one of Sichely's subjects, having been on a visit to Seleka. They expected to reach Sichely in seven days.

For many succeeding days my difficulties with respect to bringing on the waggons continued to increase. The rain still poured down, rendering the country impossible to travel, and my oxen died daily of the tsetse-bite. In

this condition my progress was slow and painful in the extreme, and I awaited anxiously the expected succour from Mr. Livingstone. At length I came fairly to a stand, not having sufficient oxen left to draw one waggon. I formed my camp in a shady bend of the river, and fortified it with a high hedge of thorny trees, and in a few days more all my cattle had died with the exception of two young oxen, which I inclined to think would survive the bite of the fatal "tsetse."

On the 7th of December I resolved to have some fishing, accordingly I routed out some old salmon-fishing tackle, and sallied forth with one of the waggon whipsticks for a rod, and some string for a line. I baited my hook with a bit of the blue wildebeest, and put on a cork for a bob. I cast in my bait in a quiet bend of the river, and anxiously watched the cork, which very soon began to bob. I then conjured up many forms in my mind, and wondered whether it would be a fair fish, such as I might expect in my own land's rivers, or something more like a young crocodile. I was not fated to live long upon conjecture however, for next moment under went the cork, and striking sharply I threw over my head a fine grey fish about a pound weight, and in appearance like a haddock, with a broad mouth and eight or ten feelers. My Bushman said the Boers about the Orange River knew this fish, and loved to catch and eat it. Presently my perseverance was rewarded by a second fish of the

same kind as the first; and after this I hooked a very heavy fish, which I lost. I doubt not but most excellent sport might be obtained in the Limpopo.

In the evening Carey and I cut down a very dense thorn-tree to inspect the nest of a secretary. The summit of the tree was very wide, dense, and level, and from the terrible nature of the thorns it was utterly inaccessible without the aid of the hatchet. When the tree fell, out from its nest rolled a young secretary, and immediately disgorged its last meal, which consisted of "four lizards of different sorts, of which one was a cameleon, one locust, one quail, and a mouse."

A few days after this I sent out John and Carey into different airts to seek game, and each killed a pallah; but the sky threatening rain they did not wait to escort their venison, but left natives to bring it on. A considerable time having elapsed, and the Bakalahari not appearing, I despatched John and some of the natives in my service to look after them, and it was well I did so; for on reaching his pallah John found the Bakalahari whom he had left to convey it to camp in the act of bolting with the half of it, having cunningly (as he thought) hacked the other half with a sharp stone, and dirtied the flesh with the entrails, thinking to persuade us that it had been done by a leopard or hyæna.

It was now twenty days since I despatched natives to the nearest missionary to inform him of my distress, and

solicit assistance in oxen, and they might ere now have reached me, if all was well ; this caused me many painful doubts and apprehensions. Day after day was passing away, and hourly I felt my situation more and more irksome and tedious. Moreover, my supplies were fast coming to an end. I certainly felt my fixed position most painful. At length, however, that aid which I so earnestly yet fearfully prayed for was at hand.

On the morning of the 16th, as I was preparing my breakfast, I suddenly beheld a civilized-looking native approach me ; he wore a shirt, a pair of leather trousers, and a sailor's red nightcap, and carried a gun and shooting-belt. The instant I beheld him I said aloud, " Natives from Sichely,—the oxen are at hand." It was even so : my messengers had found Mr. Livingstone at home, who, on hearing of my distress, had at once in the noblest manner despatched men with his whole stock of trek-oxen to my assistance. These I had now the inexpressible satisfaction to behold reach me in safety. We inspanned at once, and commenced our march, and continued to make good way for several days ; and on the 26th we reached Kolubeng, the new residence of Sichely. In the morning that chief brought me two young oxen, which I all but purchased for an old saddle and two pounds of powder ; but we split upon the cup of powder being level and not piled.

A day or two after I ascended the rocky hill above

the town with Mr. Livingstone, to obtain a view of the surrounding country. I came upon a very high heap of well-bleached mouldering bones of many varieties of game, amassed and piled here by a mighty Nimrod, now no more, who had in days of yore chosen this hill for his habitation. Mr. Livingstone pointed out to me a range of tabular hills to the south-east, near the sources of the Kolubeng, throughout which he informed me the sable antelope was to be met with. In the evening Sichely came to trade with me, when I obtained several young oxen in barter from him.

On arriving at Sichely's I despatched natives to Bakatla, to fetch two spans of oxen which I had left on my way into the interior in charge of Mr. Edwards, and with these on the 3rd of the new year we again inspanned and tried to make a start with twelve oxen in each waggon: they however, finding the waggons extremely heavy, would not move them, nor could we prevail upon them to take to their wonted work, as they ought to do, until every ox had been most unmercifully flogged with both waggon-whips and jamboks. Our course for Bakatla was south-westerly, but owing to the position of the mountains we were obliged to make a very zigzag and circuitous march. We halted at sundown. The country here is the most pleasing I have seen in Africa,—beautifully wooded, undulating plains, valleys, straths, and conical and tabular mountains of most fascinating appearance, invariably

wooded to their summits, stretching away on every side.

We marched steadily for several days, and on the 7th reached Bakatla, which was looking extremely beautiful, being surrounded by very green fields of Bechuana corn. Here we remained a few days whilst I obtained fresh oxen, and then pushing on we gained the river Molopo. Early on the 14th I drew up my waggons on its northern bank, and in the forenoon I sallied forth to seek for reitbuck, which are here abundant. At this hour of the day, however, it was of little use to seek for them, as they were lying concealed in the endless dense reeds which enclose the Molopo, in some parts extending to a breadth of half a mile; their height averaging from twelve to twenty feet and upwards. I found plenty of spoor, including the fresh spoor of lions, which along the Molopo are always abundant. The day was excessively hot, and there was a most painful oppressive feeling in the atmosphere to an extent which I had rarely experienced. In the afternoon dark masses of clouds arose along the horizon on every side, and constant thunder bellowed in the distance: a little before the sun went down the sky above and all around looked extremely threatening, and I directed my people to prepare for a tempestuous night.

At this time I observed a reitbuck grazing beyond the dense reeds on the other side of the Molopo, and I at once held for him, with my little Moore rifle, accompanied

by my Bushman. We had some difficulty in penetrating the dense reeds, and on gaining the other side a change in the direction of the wind started off the reitbuck; I then observed two other reitbuck, a buck and a doe, coming out to graze some distance to windward, and commenced a stalk in upon them. Having proceeded about half-way I suddenly observed two huge yellow lionesses, about a hundred and fifty yards to my left, walking along the edge of the reeds, holding a course parallel to my own. The reitbucks smelt the lions and lay down. I got very near them, but they started off, and bounded straight away from me: I fired and missed the buck.

Ruyter came towards me, and I ran forward to obtain a view beyond a slight rise in the ground to see whither the lionesses had gone. In so doing I came suddenly upon them, within about seventy yards; they were standing looking back at Ruyter. I then very rashly commenced making a rapid stalk in upon them, and fired at the nearest, having only one shot in my rifle. The ball told loudly, and the lioness at which I had fired wheeled right round, and came on lashing her tail, showing her teeth, and making that horrid murderous deep growl which an angry lion generally utters. At the same moment her comrade, who seemed better to know that she was in the presence of man, made a hasty retreat into the reeds. The instant the lioness came on I stood up to my full height, holding my rifle, and my arms extended, and high above my head.

This checked her in her course, but on looking round and missing her comrade, and observing Ruyter slowly advancing, she was still more exasperated, and, fancying that she was being surrounded, she made another forward movement, growling terribly. This was a moment of great danger. I felt that my only chance of safety was extreme steadiness, so, standing motionless as a rock, with my eyes firmly fixed upon her, I called out in a clear commanding voice, "Holloa! old girl, what's the hurry? take it easy; holloa! holloa!" She instantly once more halted, and seemed perplexed, looking round for her comrade. I then thought it prudent to beat a retreat, which I very slowly did, talking to the lioness all the time. She seemed undecided as to her future movements, and was gazing after me and snuffing the ground when I last beheld her.

The sun was under, and terrific thunder which burst around proclaimed a coming tempest: I therefore deemed it safe to reach my camp with all possible speed, and, having loaded my rifle, we held thither at a sharp trot, holding for the old waggon-drift to avoid having to pass through the dense reeds. Before I reached the drift two reitbuck dashed past me, one of which I shot and bore to camp. On reaching camp the first move was to refresh the person. Before however I could accomplish this the tempest was upon us; it was one of the most violent I had experienced for years, the wind blowing a

perfect hurricane, accompanied by rattling hailstones and rain, which fell in such torrents as in a few minutes to convert the dry ground into a befitting habitation for fish or water-fowl : the thunder and lightning were most appalling, and burst and flashed above and around us, threatening our momentary destruction. The wind blew one side of my sail over the roof of the tent, the sail's fastenings having been insecure, leaving myself and my property exposed to the pelting rain, which in a few seconds had deluged bedding, blankets, pillows, rifles, sacks, tiger-skins, karosses, stuffed heads, &c. &c. I however quickly piped all hands to bend on another sail which I fortunately had in the waggon, and when this was accomplished my castle was once more waterproof. The violence of the wind had set my oxen at liberty, and when the tempest had passed away they were found to have passed away with it, which it may be supposed left me in no very placid temper, this being exactly the sort of night on which the stealthy prowling tyrant of the wilderness is ever found to be most active in his murderous pursuits ; and, as if to add to my anxiety on the subject, lions immediately commenced roaring on every side, especially to leeward, being the course which cattle invariably take before a storm.

When day dawned men were despatched on the spoor of the oxen. I was busy all the forenoon drying my saturated property. The sun was high, and yet no tidings

of my cattle. I began to be extremely anxious. About midday some of the Bakatla Bechuanas brought me one ox ; it was "Youngman," the last of the Mohicans. On beholding him a pang of sorrow shot through my heart. He brought my melancholy losses all fresh as at a single glance before me ; his appearance was worn and emaciated, and it was evident that soon the vulture and hyæna would leave his whitening bones to bleach upon the glowing plain.

Who then was "Youngman" that he could call up such melancholy associations? "Youngman" was the only dying survivor of thirty selected trek-oxen which I had chosen to accompany me into the far interior, all of which I had seen pine away and die, and fail me in the hour of need. The men who brought me "Youngman" said that they had found him on the spoor of the other cattle, and about two hours afterwards I had the satisfaction to behold all the missing truants recovered. They had been seduced away by some young oxen I had obtained at Bakatla, which seemed to have resolved to return to their former masters, perhaps not relishing old Adonis's treatment of them in the yoke.

We now held on to the Meritsane (rendered famous among sportsmen by Harris's glowing description of its charms), and found it full of water. Before reaching this point, however, I left the old-established Kuruman waggon-road about three miles from the drift, my line of

march being to visit Mahura, chief of the Batlapis, residing about the sources of the Hart River. This route is by many days shorter than by the old road, and has also the advantage of being through a firm grassy country. As we reached the Meritsane we started a cock and hen ostrich, with a large troop of extremely small young ones, which did not seem larger than guinea-fowls.

We held on for several days through a country abounding in game, and reached Mahura's town on the 25th. As we drew near to the town, Mahura was pointed out to me. He was walking in company with another old man, and carried a double-barrelled percussion rifle on his shoulder. He was dressed in a shirt, waistcoat, and baggy trousers, and wore a broad-rimmed hat à la Boer. Halting my waggons, I went up and shook hands with him, and asked his permission to outspan, which was graciously granted. Mahura and his aristocracy remained with us all the evening drinking my coffee, and fishing or pumping out all the news he could from me and my natives; and at a late hour this ill-expressed cunning old tyrant took leave for the night, requesting that I would inspan in the morning, and bring up my waggons close to his dwelling-house, that he might enjoy as much of my society as possible during my stay at his town, and that we might trade with more facility.

Accordingly, in the morning I drove up my waggons, and very soon his highness made his appearance, and

requested me to get ready some coffee. Presently about a dozen fine young oxen were brought up, which he said were to purchase powder, and after coffee we proceeded to trading. I selected one young ox, and offered him six pounds of powder for it. He then desired to see the powder, and on my measuring it out he said that I must add two more. From his manner it appeared to me that he did not intend to deal with me even if I gave him what he asked ; so I said I would let him have one pound more, and if he did not like to take it we could not deal. He then, with the greatest nonchalance, said, "Lay by your powder," and commenced talking on some other subject. Being very anxious to obtain some good specimens of the large-horned oxen of the Kalihari, and Mahura being by report in possession of some, which he had lifted from the Bawangketse, I told him that if he would bring them up I would give him a good price for them. He said that he had cattle with large horns, and that he would send to one of his outposts for two oxen which would frighten me to look at.

In the evening the cattle came ; these were two immensely tall, gaunt, hollow-sided, very remarkable-looking animals, and carried truly enormous horns. The head of one of them was very handsome ; the horns were very wide and fair set, going out quite horizontally for some distance on leaving the head : their width, from point to point, might have been about eight feet. This ox was

roan-coloured on his face and along the top of his back. The other was red ; his horns were thicker than those of his comrade, and were of good length, with very good points, but their sweep was not graceful. They were neither of them so thick as the horns of my red Wangketse ox, Rob Roy, which I left with Fossey, nor by any means so handsome ; yet, nevertheless, they were both very remarkable heads, and perhaps such another pair I might never again fall in with. I told Mahura, that I possessed finer specimens, but I should be happy to have a deal with him. He then showed me two fine bull-elephant tusks, for which I offered him cash ; but he said he had no understanding in cash, and that he would keep them until he saw something he stood in need of. His drift was to get one of my valuable double rifles out of me.

Next day Mahura brought me the two large-horned Kalihari oxen, and after coffee he asked me if I was going to buy. I asked him what he wanted for the oxen, when he said powder. I said that I would take them both, and give him eight pounds of powder for each. On hearing my offer he only laughed, and, turning round, ordered his herds to drive the cattle back to the post. I asked him what he wanted for them : this he would not state, but remarked, " You were wont to ride by the Motito road. They may well now say, ' Alas ! we have lost that good trader ; now may Mahura rejoice

that that good man has gone to trade with him.'” The meaning of this speech was, that Mochuara, the chief at Motito, had presented me with an ox carrying very large horns, and that in return I had given him a gun. I now considered that I had already been too long with this ruffian, and I accordingly called for my oxen and marched for the Vaal River, distant a day and a half. We held on until sundown, having halted for an hour at midday.

We resumed our march at daybreak on the 28th, and held on through boundless open plains. As we advanced, game became more and more abundant. In about two hours we reached a fine fountain, beside which was a small cover of trees and bushes, which afforded an abundant supply of fire-wood. Here we outspanned for breakfast; it was a fine cool morning, with a pleasant breeze. The country was thickly covered with immense herds of game, consisting of zebra, wildebeest, blesbok, and springbok. There could not have been less than five or six thousand head of game in sight of me as I sat at breakfast. Presently the whole of this game began to take alarm. Herd joined herd, and took away up the wind; and in a few minutes other vast herds came pouring on up-wind, covering the whole breadth of the plain with a living mass of noble game.

Bakalahari now hove in sight, running at intervals across the plain, bearing parasols of black ostrich-feathers, which they brandished on high, to press on the panic-stricken

herds. These fellows must have had good wind, for they held on at a steady trot, exactly like wild dogs (only that the wild dogs gallop and do not trot), and did not allow the game to get very far in advance. It was evident that they were driving it to a range of pitfalls in advance; but being without steeds, and in extreme pain from a swelled ankle, I was unable to follow them up and ascertain their success as I wished to have done. My ankle became daily worse. I applied leeches to it at Mahura's, which helped me a little, but the number was too small to be of great benefit. I was now entirely unable to set my foot to the ground. Carey thought it was erysipelas, and I was very apprehensive that it would end in something extremely serious.

On the 29th we again set out, and in about three hours we reached the fair, long-wished-for, yet much-dreaded, Vaal River. I say much-dreaded, because, from the constant rains which had continually been falling this season, I had made up my mind that it was not improbable I might have to lie for many months upon the banks of this often impassable river. On this occasion, however, to my great satisfaction, and quite contrary to my expectations, I found the river low, and the drift, which I had never seen before, very good, and free from rocks or very large stones. The descent from our side was easy, but the ascent from the drift on the opposite side was steep and muddy; and some smart showers of

rain, which had been falling during the last two hours, had rendered it so slippery that I deemed it best to out-span, and defer taking the drift until the ground should dry a little in the afternoon, when I got my waggons through in safety, taking one at a time with twenty steady oxen.

We now made the Vet River, which flows into the Vaal a little above the drift, and followed its course towards Colesberg. This we found to be an excellent road, but inclining too far to the east. Our march led us through vast herds of game, which I have before spoken of as frequenting the northern boundaries of the colony. On the 20th of February I crossed the Great Orange River at Alleman's Drift, and entered Colesberg next day. I found most of my old friends still here, and also my redoubtable friend old Murphy, as wild and as jolly as ever.

I hired the old barracks for my residence during my stay in Colesberg, and immediately set about sewing up my trophies in canvas, and stowing them away in cases. This was accomplished in about fourteen days. A fortnight more was spent in preparing for another hunting expedition. I purchased a new waggon from a Mr. Emslie for a hundred pounds, and a fresh stud of sixteen horses, a mule, and a span of oxen from various parties in town, and subsequently I increased my stud to twenty.

CHAPTER XXXI.

Start on my fifth and last Expedition into the Interior — Mr. Orpen accompanies me — Hurried March — Extraordinary Herd of Blesboks — The Hart River — Cattle attacked with Hoof Sickness — Three Lionesses fearfully mangle my pack of Dogs — Lion-hunts — Hyænas devour my Camp-stools — Meritsane — Six Buffaloes shot — Another Lion-hunt — Glorious Chase with Elands — Sichely's Kraal — We cross the Limpopo — A Lion attacks my Kraal and kills an Ox — A Field of Battle — Seboono — My hundredth Elephant! — We march down the Limpopo and hunt Hippopotami — Attacked by Rheumatic Fever — Mr. Orpen nearly killed by a Leopard.

ON the 19th of March, 1848, I left Colesberg with three waggons "well manned and stored," for my fifth and last cruise in the far interior. I was joined by a Mr. Orpen (a mighty Nimrod), who, notwithstanding my representing to him the dangers and hardships of an elephant-hunting expedition in their blackest colours, kindly agreed to favour me with his help and company on my lonely trip. My sojourn in Colesberg reduced me considerably, and I was glad once more to breathe the fresh air of the country. We got clear of Colesberg at about nine A.M., and commenced our march over the country I had so often marked with my wheel-tracks, and which my

reader must now be fully acquainted with. On my way I completely recruited my oxen and stud, and prepared myself to take the field with an immense pack of stout serviceable dogs. I also engaged as after-rider a Bushman named Booi.

The game became plentiful in about ten days. after we left Colesberg, but when we came to the Vet River I beheld with astonishment and delight decidedly one of the most wonderful displays which I had witnessed during my varied sporting career in Southern Africa. On my right and left the plain exhibited one purple mass of graceful blesboks, which extended without a break as far as my eyes could strain: the depth of their vast legions covered a breadth of about six hundred yards. On pressing upon them, they cantered along before me, not exhibiting much alarm, taking care, however, not to allow me to ride within at least four hundred yards of them. On, on I rode intensely excited with the wondrous scene before me, and hoped at length to get to windward of at least some portion of the endless living mass which darkened the plain, but in vain. Like squadrons of dragoons, the entire breadth of this countless herd held on their forward course as if aware of my intention, and resolved not to allow me to weather them.

At length I determined to play upon their ranks, and, pressing my horse to his utmost speed, I dashed forward, and, suddenly halting, sprang from the saddle, and, giving



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Extraordinary Herd of Blesboks.



my rifle at least two feet of elevation, fired right and left into one of their darkest masses. A noble buck dropped to the right barrel, and the second shot told loudly ; no buck, however, fell, and after lying for half a minute the prostrate blesbok rose, and was quickly lost sight of among his retreating comrades. In half a minute I was again loaded, and after galloping a few hundred yards let drive into them, but was still unsuccessful. Excited and annoyed at my want of luck, I resolved to follow them up, and blaze away while a shot remained in the locker, which I did ; until, after riding about eight or nine miles, I found my ammunition expended, and not a single blesbok bagged, although at least a dozen must have been wounded. It was now high time to retrace my steps and seek my waggons. I accordingly took a point, and rode across the trackless country in the direction for which they were steering.

I very soon once more fell in with fresh herds of thousands of blesboks. As it was late in the day, and I being on the right side for the wind, the blesboks were very tame, and allowed me to ride along within rifle-shot of them, and those which ran charged resolutely past me up the wind in long-continued streams. I took a lucky course for the waggons, and came right upon them, after they had outspanned on the bank of the Vet River. I could willingly have devoted a month to blesbok-shooting in this hunter's elysium, but, having heard from a party of Bastards

that the Vaal River was low, and being extremely anxious to push on, I inspanned, and continued my march by moonlight. Before proceeding far we discovered the deeply imprinted spoor of an enormous lion, which had walked along the waggon-track for several hundred yards. We continued our march till after midnight, vast herds of blesbok charging from us on every side. Lions were heard roaring for the first time during this night.

On the 22nd of April after some trouble we crossed the Vaal River, and on the 25th we reached Mahura's. I rode ahead of the waggons, and found the old ruffian busily engaged with some of his nobility in reducing with adzes a thornwood tree, which was to serve as a beam in a new dwelling-house he was about to erect. He was astonished to see me return so soon, and expressed much satisfaction thereat. I asked Mahura if he had still the two large-horned oxen which I had seen when last here ; he replied, they were still forthcoming. In half an hour the waggons arrived, and I drew them up outside the town. The chief shortly afterwards made his appearance, and had coffee with us.

For many days back our oxen had been looking very spare, and fallen off in condition, and one or two exhibited symptoms of the tongue sickness at the Vaal River. We now had the intense mortification to discover that nearly the whole of them were attacked with either tongue or hoof sickness. This discovery cast a sad gloom over our

prospects. I was unacquainted with the nature of either of the maladies, and the Hottentots declared that an ox required months to recover from either of them, and that they often proved fatal. In this state of things I deemed it prudent to begin to purchase young oxen from Mahura and his tribe, and I gave him to understand that I was willing to do so. The chief replied that his people would be unwilling to bring their oxen, because when I had last passed through his country they had brought oxen for barter, and I had purchased none of them; he, however, promised to acquaint them with my wishes. In the afternoon, my waggons having outspanned at a great distance from the water, I inspanned, and trekked down to the Hart stream, which I crossed, and drew up on its opposite bank.

Next day the chief, instead of coming to trade as he had given me to understand he would, held a hunting party with a number of his people on the old Scottish principle of the ring, a common and successful mode of hunting among the South African tribes. On this occasion, however, the ring was mismanaged, and the game broke through. In the evening one large ox was brought for barter, but we did not agree about the price. Our oxen now presented a most woful appearance, the greater part of them being very lame, and nearly all more or less ailing. This was a most startling fact, and, as the Bechuanas did not seem disposed to bring oxen for barter, it

threatened to oppose an insurmountable barrier to our progress either backwards or forwards.

Two hours having elapsed after breakfast the following morning, and the chief not having made his appearance according to promise, Mr. O. and I went up to the palace to ask him what were his intentions in respect to the trading. He replied that he could not force his people to bring me oxen, but that he had intimated my wishes to them. I then remarked that he would do me a friendship if he would set his people the example by first dealing with me himself, as I knew that I should then have no difficulty with them. The chief, after some demur, told me that oxen would be brought for barter, and requested me to go before him to the waggons, and get my coffee-kettle under weigh. In the evening I obtained one good-looking ox from one of his men for ammunition. When Mahura left I presented him with some sugar for his coffee and a whipstick.

The chief again made his appearance, accompanied by his interpreter and several of his people, early next day, bringing stout young cattle to barter for guns and ammunition. Having taken coffee, the chief called me aside, and, pointing out to me two good-looking young oxen, said they were his, and that he wanted powder for them. I asked him how much he would require, and he replied that he had brought a measure, and that if I would fill it with powder I could have the two oxen. When I beheld

the wooden measure I thought the chief was going to drive a hard bargain with me. On filling it, however, with powder, I found that it held about eighteen pounds, and as this was not an exorbitant price for two good oxen I was very glad to get them, and I told the chief I was satisfied with his measure. He and all his people seemed to think they had got a bargain, and, the example now being set, the trading went on rapidly, and by sundown I had purchased twenty-two oxen, twenty of which were quite fit for work. In the forenoon Mr. O. and I went to look at the cattle (which we allowed to remain night and day in the veld), and had the satisfaction to find a decided improvement in them. The chief was in high spirits all day, and on leaving me in the forenoon he said he would give me a fat cow to kill for my people, and that he would bring me a large-horned ox to purchase. In the evening the fat cow was brought and slain, but the herds brought the wrong ox, so the chief sent it back again. A cousin of the chief, named Mokalliharri, anxious to cultivate my good graces, gave me a fat wether. We remained several days longer purchasing oxen, which, together with our horses, now amounted to one hundred and eleven, not counting our lame oxen, which we determined to leave with Mahura.

On the 3rd of May we again inspanned, and held on beyond the Hart River. The country to the west was not frequented by the game, and here the grass was

tall and rank ; and covers of considerable size of thorn-trees and grey-leaved bushes were scattered over the landscape ; it was a still and secluded spot. I observed several vultures soaring over one of these covers within a quarter of a mile of the waggons, and, thinking it very probable that they were attracted by some lion devouring his prey, I ordered a couple of horses to be saddled and rode towards the place, with one after-rider and about a dozen of my dogs. I was right in my conjecture ; for, as I cantered along, I had the satisfaction to behold a majestic old black-maned lion walking parallel to me, and within a hundred yards. He had not yet observed me : he looked so dark, that at the first glance I mistook him in the long grass for a blue wildebeest ; next moment, however, he turned his large, full, imposing face to me, and I knew that it was he. Shouting to the dogs with all my might, I at once dashed towards him, followed by my after-rider at a respectful distance carrying my rifle.

The lion, as I expected, was panic-stricken, and took to his heels, bounding through the long grass at top speed. The dogs went at him in gallant style, I following not far behind them, and yelling to encourage my pack. The lion, finding we had the speed of him, reduced his pace to a sulky trot, and the dogs came up and followed barking within a few yards on each side of him. In half a minute more I had passed ahead and halted my horse for a shot ; but looking round for my after-rider, who

carried my rifle, I beheld him slowly approaching with pallid countenance at least a hundred yards behind. The lion faced about, and, springing on Shepherd, one of my favourite dogs, he lay for several seconds upon him, and having bitten him so that he could not rise he continued his course. A few moments after he knocked over another dog, called Vixen, which escaped with a slight scratch. The lion had now gained the edge of a small cover, and Booi, coming up at a very easy pace, handed me my rifle. In another minute the noble beast came to bay in a thick bush, and, facing round, lay down to await our attack. I then rode up to within twelve yards of him, and, halting my horse, I ended the grim lion's career with a single ball behind the shoulder, cutting the main arteries close to the heart. On receiving the ball his head dropped to the ground, and, gasping for a moment, he expired. I dismounted, and, plucking a lock of hair from his mane, I placed it in my bosom and returned to camp, having been absent barely ten minutes.

After breakfast a party went to inspect the lion, and bring home his trophies. On proceeding to seek for Shepherd, the dog which the lion had knocked over in the chase, I found him with his back broken and his bowels protruding from a gash in the stomach; I was, therefore, obliged to end his misery with a ball.

We marched again at sunrise, and at about ten A.M. I drew up my waggons beside the large pan where I had

been storm-stayed for a week last season. On the march I shot a springbok ; and observing vultures, Mr. O. and I rode towards them with a troop of the dogs, in the hope of falling in with a lion, but were disappointed. In the afternoon, directing the waggons to follow, I rode ahead with Booi ; and on reaching the next large pan I drew the cover lying to the south of it, expecting to find a lion. When the waggons came up I formed my camp beside the thorn-grove, and, observing a herd of blue wildebeest making for my cattle, I proceeded to waylay them, and I fired two long shots. Next minute Booi came up to me, and said that on my firing he had observed a lion stick his head up in the long grass in the vley opposite to me. I felt inclined to doubt the veracity of his optics. I sent him back, however, with instructions to bring eight dogs, but Booi thought the whole pack would be better, and returned with thirty.

I then rode direct for the spot where the lion was supposed to be. Booi was correct ; and on drawing near, two savage lionesses sat up in the grass and growled fiercely at us. An unlucky belt of reeds, about sixty yards long and twenty broad, intervened between me and the lionesses, and on perceiving their danger they at once dashed into this cover : then followed the most woful cutting up and destruction amongst my best and most valuable dogs. The lionesses had it all their own way. In vain I rode round and round the small cover endea-

vouring to obtain a peep of them, which would have enabled me to put a speedy conclusion to the murderous work within. The reeds were so tall and dense, that, although the lionesses were often at bay within eight or ten yards of me, it was impossible to see them. At length one came outside the cover on the opposite side, when I fired a shot from the saddle. My horse was unsteady, nevertheless I wounded her, and, acknowledging the shot with angry growls, she re-entered the reeds.

A number of the dogs, which had gone off after a herd of blue wildebeests, now returned, and, coming down through the long grass, started a third lioness, which came growling down into the cover and joined her comrades. This was the signal for my united pack to make a bold sally into the centre of the lions' den, when they were savagely met by the three lionesses, who rushed furiously up and down, knocking the dogs about with just as much facility as three cats would have disposed of the same number of mice. For several minutes nothing was to be heard but the crashing of the reeds, the growling of the lions, and the barking and shrieking of the mangled pack : it was truly a most painful moment to my feelings. Carey, who had come up to assist, remarked to me that "there was an awful *massacree* going on among the dogs ;" and he was right. Night now setting in put an end to this horrid work, and, with feelings of remorse and

deep regret at my folly in not having at once called off my poor dogs, I wended my way to camp. On numbering the slain three of my best hounds were found to have forfeited their lives in the unequal contest, and seven or eight more were very badly wounded, exposing the most fearful gashes, from which several of them never recovered. Whilst I was occupied with the lions my followers were forming a kraal for the cattle.

Before the day began to break next morning lions were heard roaring to the west: accordingly, I rode in that direction with Booi and a detachment of dogs, still resolved to follow the king of beasts, notwithstanding the disasters of the former day. Having ridden about a mile, we reached the end of a long piece of cover, averaging a hundred yards in breadth, where I at once discovered the fresh spoor of a troop of lions. The dogs took it up and followed on at a wary pace, the hair bristling on their backs. On reaching the end of this cover a second one appeared several hundred yards to my right, whilst a little to my left was a small vley, and here I observed a jackal steal away, while a crow sounded his ominous voice in advance.

These signs bid fair for the proximity of lions, and I remarked to Booi that we must be upon them; it was so. Next moment I observed a yellowish form on a barish spot two hundred yards ahead, which we knew must be the lion, and thither we rode at top speed. On observing

us he raised his noble head, but quickly again laid it flat on the ground, intending to crouch in the hope that we should pass him by unnoticed. Within twenty yards of him lay a noble lioness with two half-grown young lions. On seeing that our course was direct for where they lay, they bounded up and charged for the cover to our right, the old lion displaying more cowardice than either his royal spouse or the young lions, and taking the lead at the best pace that he could muster. I did not wait for my rifle, but shouting to my dogs I pressed forward and tried to cut off his retreat. I was even with him and the lioness, and within twenty yards, when they reached the cover, which they sullenly entered. The dogs seemingly were apprehensive of following too near such dangerous game, probably warned by the fate of their comrades on the preceding day.

The noble game having thus retreated, I placed Booi at one end of the cover to keep watch, while I rode to the other end to beat up through the centre with the dogs. Twice I drew the cover unsuccessfully, but the third time the dogs found the lioness lying under a bushy tree. Then followed a bay, when I rode up and gave her both barrels behind the shoulder, which partially disabled her. My third shot entered beside her eye and blew away the entire half of her brain-pan. When riding up I had heard a dog shriek, and on looking round me I beheld poor Vitberg, a valuable dog, and one that was extremely

attached to me, lying on the ground utterly disabled, with his hip so fearfully mangled that I was obliged to blow his brains out.

A fourth time we drew the cover for the old lion, but were still unsuccessful. Booï and I then skinned the lioness, cut off her head, and returned to camp. Shortly after reaching the waggons I observed a blue wildebeest approaching my cattle, which I stalked and shot. The afternoon set in with a most terrific hailstorm, such as I had never before witnessed; many of the stones were from two to three inches in diameter. The storm came on with a sound resembling the roaring of the sea: a dense intervening fall of rain obscuring our view, we were at a loss to think what it could be. The storm sent our cattle and horses flying before it for miles across the plain, and they were hardly recovered before the sun was under. It blew a gale of wind throughout the first half of the night; tremendous showers of hail and rain succeeding one another in quick succession, accompanied by appalling thunder and lightning.

As the day broke we heard lions moaning to the west, and I rode in quest of them, accompanied by Mr. O. and Carey, with a detachment of dogs. In drawing the cover beside which I had found the lions yesterday, I came upon two young lions, one of which, standing to give us battle, I finished with two shots: his comrade stole away, but after a sharp burst the dogs ran him to

bay, when I rode up, and, dismounting, flogged the dogs off, and slew him with a single shot in the skull.

The next morning, which was the 9th, for several hours before the day dawned, a lion stood roaring terribly on a bushy eminence within two hundred yards of the waggons, and held west just as it became light, roaring occasionally as he went. We determined to give him battle if we could only find him, and before it was clear we were in our saddles pricking along the edge of the vley, accompanied by about a dozen of the dogs, who started the noble beast, but he got away unseen by any of us.

Our dogs kept up an incessant barking during the night, and we imagined that lions were prowling around our camp. In the morning, however, we discovered that we had been favoured with the presence of far less illustrious, yet more presuming visitors. A pack of audacious hyænas had visited our fireside, and, not content with cracking and swallowing the bones which they found there, they had eaten our table-cloth, which consisted of the skin of a sable antelope, and carried off the lid of our canteen and two large camp-stools, which I lately had made to order in Colesberg. One of these we had the good fortune to recover, minus the rheimpys; the other will probably be found in after years, and preserved as a Bechuana or Bushman relic.

On the 12th I drew up my waggons on the north bank of the famous Meritsane. Here I had the pleasure to

find that, owing to a large tract of the country having been burnt by the Bakalahari some months previously, and favoured by the rainy season, a rich and verdant crop of young grass had sprung up, giving the undulating plains a fresh and vernal appearance. I was delighted on beholding this, for I knew that it would have the effect of attracting the game hither from all the surrounding parts, and I confidently hoped to fall in with elands, as they are generally met with by the foremost hunters in the vicinity of the Meritsane. Having breakfasted, I saddled up three of my fleetest steeds, and, accompanied by two after-riders, I rode forth in a northerly direction, and carefully sought for eland's spoor. Presently I crossed the old Kuruman road, and immediately discovered fresh spoor, similar to that of elands, but, in my opinion, a little too large. In a buffalo country I should have at once pronounced it to be the spoor of buffaloes, but these for many years had not frequented the Meritsane, and were not to be expected nearer than the Molopo. Even in the days of Harris, twelve years ago, or upwards, buffaloes had forsaken the Meritsane. As I rode on, the spoor became more abundant, and very soon fresh dung disclosed to me that a very large herd of buffaloes had lately pastured there.

The spoor of zebras, blue wildebeests, hartebeests, and sassaybys was extremely abundant, and of all of these I fell in with very considerable herds. I had resolved, how-

ever, not to disturb the country, for fear of starting any elands which might be there, and rode past, leaving them unmolested. After proceeding for many miles, I had the mortification to ascertain that only a very few elands now frequented these parts, and after a fruitless search for these few I turned my face for camp, and resolved to fire into whatever game I might fall in with. I yached a large herd of blue wildebeest and a herd of hartebeests, and was very unfortunate, wounding several, but failing to secure one. This was to me most particularly annoying, our flesh in camp being completely exhausted, and my large pack of dogs famishing. I resolved therefore to march next morning for Lotlokane, and hunt in advance of the waggons.

The next day I rode forth with one after-rider, resolved to do my best to supply the deficiency in camp. I directed the waggons to follow, and outspan at the Flat Rocks, half-way to Lotlokane. I had proceeded but a short distance when I had the satisfaction to behold a magnificent herd of buffaloes quietly pasturing within half a mile of me on the opposite bank of the Meritsane. This was a first-rate look-out, and exactly what I stood in need of, considering the present low state of my commissariat. I returned to meet the waggons, where I saddled another steed, named Brown, which was steady under fire, and I once more rode forth, accompanied by Mr. O., with two after-riders, and a large detach-

ment of the dogs, resolved to deal death among the buffaloes. We rode to leeward of the herd to give the dogs their wind, and then galloped in upon them. At first, bewildered, they stood gazing at us until we were within thirty yards of them, when, seeing their danger, a panic spread throughout the whole herd, and, wheeling about, they crashed along through the underwood in a dense mass, impeding one another's progress.

In two minutes I was alongside of the herd, and, dismounting, fired right and left into two old cows ; one of these immediately dropped to the rear of the troop, and, staggering for a few seconds, fell over and expired. The herd now left the river and doubled back, passing through a belt of low cover. I halted a moment to load. Following on, I came right upon the other buffalo that I had wounded, standing with a comrade in a dense bush. I observed her before she could charge me, and three more shots laid her low. The reports of Mr. O.'s gun now sounded ahead, and, galloping forward, I observed him to my right actively engaged with four old buffaloes, which stood at bay in a large bush in the open country ; the herd had vanished. A single buffalo, however, was at this moment making off between me and Mr. O., to which I gave chase. My after-rider was up first, and headed it, when the buffalo charged him furiously, and next moment she charged me, but my trusty steed was too active for her, and I bowled her over with two good shots

in the shoulder. I then rode up to assist Mr. O. Two of the four buffaloes were lying wounded in the bush. Riding up within forty yards of them, I fired into a fine old cow, when she and her comrade broke bay, and took down to the river. Some of my dogs now came up to my assistance, and brought the wounded buffalo to bay in the stream, and two more shots laid her low.

I then rode to meet my waggons, which were standing on the rising ground above ; and as I was directing my men where to draw up, I observed two more buffaloes coming down the river's side, which, observing us, took shelter in a belt of lofty reeds. Most of my dogs having come up, I resolved to have another chase, and rode straight for the reeds where the buffaloes had disappeared. I came right upon a noble bull, within four yards of him. Fortunately for me he did not charge, but broke away up the river-side, followed by the dogs. He led me a sharp chase, and came to bay at last, when he fell with two shots within thirty yards of the second cow I had shot in the commencement of the chase. This made five old buffaloes I had bagged out of the herd ; Mr. O. bagged his two, making in all seven.

After breakfast I despatched men with two spans of oxen, directing them to select four of the fattest buffaloes and drag them to the waggons. All hands were busy butchering and salting until sundown. In the evening I went out with my rifle in quest of a buffalo-calf, which

had been left by the herd in the morning. On observing me, the savage young buffalo, to my utter astonishment, turned upon me, and charged down in the most determined manner. I stood his charge, with my rifle at my shoulder, and, covering his head until he was within four yards of me, I arrested him in full career with a ball in the forehead.

Three of the buffaloes which we had shot having been left in the veld, I deemed it more than probable that a lion might be found on some one of them if sought for at early dawn; accordingly, having substituted a bowl of warm milk for coffee, I rode forth with an after-rider and a troop of my dogs to seek the king of beasts. On gaining the first buffalo, I found that my natives had left a flag of peace flying over him, which had guarded him from the attacks of the beasts of prey. Upon the second buffalo, however, a hundred vultures were feasting merrily, but, as I approached the third, the sudden rush of a flight of vultures over my head towards the buffalo told me that some occupant which had hitherto kept them aloof had that moment quitted the carcase; and on galloping forward and clearing an intervening rising ground, I had the satisfaction to behold a huge and shaggy lion trotting slowly off towards the cover along the banks of the river, within two hundred yards of me.

I instantly rode for him at top speed to get my dogs clear of the carrion, and, if possible, to bring the lion to bay

before he should gain any bad cover. We came up with him just as he gained a small belt of reeds on the river's bank. The lion sprang into the river's bed and stood at bay. Riding up within fifteen yards, I disabled him with a shot in the shoulder, and then, springing from my horse, which was unsteady, I went up to within twelve yards on foot, and finished him with my second shot, which he got behind the shoulder. This was a fine old lion, with perfect tusks and a very beautiful coat of hair. Leaving Booi to protect him from the vultures, I rode to camp, and despatched men with instructions to flay him with the utmost care. In the afternoon I inspanned, intending to march, but continued showers of rain prevented me. Next day, however, we reached Lotlokane.

As morning dawned on the 16th a lion roared to the north within a quarter of a mile of us, and shortly after two other lions moaned to the east. I rode in quest of them with dogs and an after-rider. Hartebeests, zebras, and pallahs were standing about in all directions, and leading my dogs away I failed to find the lion. In the forenoon, anxious to obtain a gemsbok, I saddled up my three fleetest steeds, and rode in a northerly direction, with two after-riders, taking with me a light single-barrelled gun. I started several fine steinboks, which are here abundant. Having ridden a few miles, I entered upon a magnificent level park, thickly adorned with groves of thorn-trees, on which were grazing

large herds of blue wildebeests, zebras, hartebeests, and springboks. Knowing that eland and gemsbok are generally to be found in the vicinity of herds of other game, I resolved to ride in a semicircle to windward of these, and carefully examine the ground for the game I sought.

Having made a sweep for this purpose, we were slowly returning, when four superb elands charged up wind right in our faces. To these we instantly gave chase. Booi, coming up first, singled out the heaviest bull, which he broke from the troop, and drove towards camp. Coming up with the remaining three, I selected the best head, and, after a sharp chase, laid him low with a single ball in the shoulder. I then rode to assist Booi, who was about a quarter of a mile to windward on the plain below me: and coming up to him, we cannily drove on the noble eland, which we succeeded in bringing right up to the waggons, where I bowled him over with two shots in the shoulder. Not yet having a stuffed bull eland's head, and this being a fair specimen, I directed it to be cut off for my collection.

We now held on for the Molopo, upon the banks of which I had some fine sport with roan antelope and reitbuck, and on the 29th of May reached Sichely's kraal on the Kouloubeng.

Within a mile of this chief's residence we were met by parties of the Baquaines: these men had been sent by

Sichely to ascertain who we were, he having heard from some Bakalahari that three waggons were at hand. I saddled up and rode ahead of the waggons with Mr. Livingstone's letters.

On the 31st we again inspanned and held on for the Limpopo, reaching my old drift on that river on the 15th of June.

The greater part of the day was devoted to cutting down the opposite bank and getting the waggons through, which we accomplished by sundown, taking each waggon through with twenty oxen.

On the 18th, the moon being full, I crossed the river with Mr. Orpen, Carey, and attendants, and made for the fountain at Charebe, in the hope of enjoying some night-shooting with elephants. We had the ill luck to alarm the elephants frequenting the water and to drive them out of the district. On the 23rd, as I was returning to camp from the water at Guapa, we suddenly heard the cry of elephants about a quarter of a mile to windward. I took Ramachumie along with me and held forward for an inspection of the troop.

The cries of elephants were repeated in different directions, and I at once knew that there must be a very large herd of them. Having ascended a lofty thorn-tree, I obtained a view of the grey backs of some of the elephants appearing above the underwood of the forest. I sent Ramachumie back to bring up the dogs,

and when they came I rode forward for a nearer inspection. It was a troop of upwards of a hundred elephants, but it consisted entirely of cows and young bulls. Having endeavoured for nearly half an hour to select a good elephant, I crept in within fifteen yards of a fairish bull, and gave him a shot behind the shoulder: my followers, however, failed to slip the dogs or to bring on my horse, and while I ran back for them the elephant got away in the herd. The dogs attacked another bull, which, after a long chase, I rolled over. The elephant had scarcely fallen, when old Mutchuisho, with a party of Bamangwato men came up like a flight of vultures in quest of flesh. The next day I shot another elephant.

On the 29th I again inspanned, and in the afternoon crossed the Mocoolwey and drew up on its opposite bank. On the march I hunted ahead of the waggons, and shot a waterbuck and doe, and started a troop of seven or eight lions, headed by a patriarchal-looking old fellow of unusual size.

One long march across country on the next day brought the waggons to the Basileka. I hunted ahead of the waggons, and shot two pallahs and a cow-camelopard. We formed the waggons at my old camp, but, observing tsetse on the horses, I at once resolved to leave Seleka's on the morrow.

About midnight a huge lion made a most daring

attack on my cattle-kraal, charging recklessly through the thick thorn-hedge : he sent the panic-stricken cattle flying in dire confusion, and dashed to the ground a valuable ox, which lay groaning in his powerful grasp. I was awakened by the noise, and, instantly directing a troop of the dogs to be let loose, the cowardly lion was put to flight. The poor ox sprang to his feet and joined his companions, but I was obliged to shoot him next day, his fore and hind quarters having been fearfully lacerated.

About nine A.M. I left Seleka's, and at sundown halted on the Limpopo, opposite Guapa.

Here I remained for many days, making successful excursions with Mr. Orpen across the river in search of elephants. On these occasions, however, and likewise upon all subsequent encounters with the elephants, I had the mortification to remark that on coming up with the elephants my followers invariably yielded to a natural impulse, and thus throughout the entire expedition the whole brunt of the elephant-hunting lay upon my shoulders, not a single elephant being bagged or even wounded by any individual in my establishment except myself.

On our return from one of these expeditions we came upon a heart-sickening sight. The Bamalette tribe, through whose district we were now hunting, had been attacked and put to flight by Sicomy a few months

before, when a large number of them were massacred, in consequence of which they had deserted their former town and ensconced themselves in an elevated ravine in the mountains. We visited their deserted town and the ground over which they had been pursued and slain. We were horrified to behold the bleaching bones and skulls of those who had fallen; the wolf and jackal had feasted on their remains, and laid the long grass flat round each skeleton, the blood being still visible upon the stones. Hair and torn fragments of karosses lay scattered around.

On the 12th I had another hard day in the mountains after elephants, and at night I watched a fountain, and shot an old lioness. She came and drank within ten yards of me; the ball entered the centre of her breast, and rested in the skin in the middle of her back.

On the 13th I despatched men to camp with the skin of the lioness, and held south for Charebe, which I found still deserted by the elephants. In the evening the natives were all busy cooking the flesh of the lioness, which was excessively fat, and esteemed by them a particular delicacy.

On the 25th of July at sunrise we inspanned and held down the river, leaving three more of my stud behind me, two dead and the other dying of tsetse. At sundown we halted about twenty miles down the river. Whilst on our march next morning we came across the fresh

spoor of a troop of bull-elephants, when I immediately outspanned. I was proceeding to follow up the elephants' spoor, when I was met by a party of Bakalahari, who informed me that other elephants had drunk on the opposite side, and some miles higher up the river, during the night. I resolved to go there in quest of them. We crossed the Limpopo at a most rocky drift, where the horses were in danger of breaking their legs, and, holding up the river, we took up the spoor of three old bulls. Having followed it for five miles, we at length got into a country so densely covered with locusts that the spoor was no longer visible. A large herd of elephants had, during several previous nights, however, been there feasting upon these insects. After a little while we made a cast in advance, and again discovered the spoor of the three bulls, and came up with them about an hour before sundown, in company with a noble troop of about fifteen other bull-elephants, and, the wind being favourable, they were not aware of our approach. Whilst riding slowly round them on the lee side, endeavouring to select the best bull, a splendid old fellow broke across from my right, whose ivory far surpassed any other in the herd. To him I accordingly adhered. and laid him low after an easy battle, having only given him five shots. I received no assistance from my dogs, they, as is often the case, having packed upon the worst elephant in the troop. The tusks of this huge elephant being unusually

perfect, I resolved to preserve the entire skull. I accordingly sent a messenger to camp to instruct my people to bring a waggon for the head, while I stood sentry over it. Three days passed before the waggon appeared, having had to cross the Limpopo at a ford many miles above my camp. I occupied myself in the mean time in preparing the feet of the elephant, which I preserved.

In a few days we reached the fountain of Seboono, at which I watched for several nights, and slew some fine old elephants with splendid tusks. I hunted, as during last season, by moonlight with dogs, and by the 24th of August had the satisfaction of making up my bag to a hundred and five select elephants killed in South Africa. We now found the district to be much deserted by the elephants, and accordingly inspanned the waggons on the 3rd of September, and marched down the Limpopo towards the district frequented by hippopotami.

On the 4th I rode up the river to shoot hippopotami. Of these I found three troops, and bagged one first-rate bull and wounded others. I saw several crocodiles of unusual vastness. Some of them must have been sixteen feet in length, with bodies as large as that of an ox. Returning to the waggons in the evening, I heard Mr. O. engaged with a huge invincible old bull-hippopotamus. On going to his assistance, and finding that he had expended his ammunition, I attacked the hippopotamus, which I barely finished with six or eight more shots.

We rode down the river for several mornings hunting after hippopotami, a great number of which we killed. As the tusks of some of these were very fine, we chopped them out of the jaw-bones, a work of considerable difficulty. On the 17th I was attacked with acute rheumatic fever, which kept me to my bed, and gave me excruciating pain. Whilst I lay in this helpless state Mr. Orpen and Present, who had gone up the river to shoot sea-cows, fell in with an immense male leopard, which the latter wounded very badly. They then sent natives to camp to ask me for dogs, of which I sent them a pair. In about an hour the natives came running to camp and said that Orpen was killed by the leopard. On further inquiry, however, I found that he was not really killed, but fearfully torn and bitten about the arms and head. They had rashly taken up the spoor on foot, the dogs following behind them, instead of going in advance. The consequence of this was, that they came right upon the leopard before they were aware of him, when Orpen fired and missed him. The leopard then sprang on his shoulders, and, dashing him to the ground, lay upon him growling and lacerating his hands, arms, and head most fearfully. Presently the leopard permitted Orpen to rise and come away. Where were the gallant Present and all the natives, that not a man of them moved to assist the unfortunate Orpen? According to an established custom among all colonial

servants, the instant the leopard sprang Present discharged his piece in the air, and then, dashing it to the ground, he rushed down the bank and jumped into the river, along which he swam some hundred yards before he would venture on terra firma. The natives, though numerous and armed, had likewise fled in another direction.

CHAPTER XXXII.

Mr. Orpen and myself in a helpless condition — We leave the low-lying Limpopo for the Mountains — Trading with Seleka — Ceremony to impart the power of successful Shooting — March to the Ngotwani and retrace our steps to the Limpopo — Enormous Herds of Buffaloes — An exciting Lion-hunt — Three of my Dogs killed — The noble Beast takes the water, followed by a Dog and a Crocodile — A bold Mountain-range — Abundance of Game — A brilliant Lion-hunt — Two killed out of a troop of four — Rhinoceros-hunting — Leave the Mariqua River — Sublime Scenery — Another Lion-hunt — A Buffalo rips up my after-rider's Horse — Camelopard-chase — Sudden encounter with two huge Lions — Arrival at Sichely's Kraal.

BOTH Orpen and myself were now reduced to a state of utter helplessness—he from his wounds, which were many and dangerous, and I from the fever, though I was slowly recovering. It was of no use therefore to remain longer in the low-lying district about the Limpopo, so I resolved to march on steadily to Sichely's country. We accordingly marched on the 27th of September, and on the 2nd of October I encamped on the bank of the Limpopo, a little above its junction with the Lepalala. Here Seleka's men requested me to halt a day, as their chief wished to trade with me, which I agreed to do.

Next morning Seleka arrived with a considerable retinue, bringing some good specimens of Bechuana arms to barter for muskets and ammunition. He made me a present of some Bechuana beer, and a sort of fermented porridge; this, he said, he considered as a gift, but he expected that I, in return, would give him some gunpowder. This is the usual style of *presents* in Southern Africa.

In the afternoon I exchanged a musket for nine very handsome assagais, a battle-axe, and two shields of buffalo-hide. I also exchanged some assagais for ammunition; and obtained other articles of native manufacture in payment for cutting the arms of two or three of the nobility, and rubbing medicine into the incisions, to enable them to shoot well. Whilst performing this absurd ceremony, in which the Bechuanas have unbounded faith, I held before the eyes of the initiated sportsman prints of each of the game quadrupeds of the country; at the same time anointing him with the medicine (which was common turpentine), and looking him most seriously in the face, I said, in his own language, "Slay the game well; let the course of thy bullet be through the hearts of the wild beasts, thine hand and heart be strong against the lion, against the great elephant, against the rhinoceros, against the buffalo," &c.

On the 5th we marched at sunrise, and, trekking steadily along, arrived on the 8th at the drift on the Limpopo where, on the former occasion, I had crossed the

river. The game was very abundant in our course, but Carey and Present were rarely successful in killing, and I was obliged, at length, weak as I was, to take the field, as we were sadly in want of flesh. On the 13th we made the banks of the Ngotwani, up which we proceeded for several days; but finding that there was scarcely any water in it, and that it would be impossible to reach Sichely's country by this route, I determined to retrace my steps. We accordingly marched for the Limpopo, which I fell in with once more on the 23rd, having killed a noble old lion in my way.

We trekked up along the banks of the river for the Mariqua, and a little before sundown fell in with two enormous herds of buffaloes, one of which, consisting chiefly of bulls, stood under the shady trees on one side of the bank, whilst the other, composed chiefly of cows and calves, stood on the opposite side, a little higher up the river. In all there were at least three hundred. Thinking it probable that if I hunted them I might kill some old bull with a head perhaps worthy of my collection, I ordered my men to outspan, and, having saddled steeds, I gave chase to the herd of bulls, accompanied by Booi and my dogs. After a short burst they took through the river, whereby I lost sight of an old bull which carried the finest head in the herd. My dogs, however, brought a cow to bay as they crossed the river, which I shot standing in the water, but not before

she had killed a particularly favourite bull-dog, named Pompey. I then continued the chase, and again came up with the herd, which was now considerably scattered ; and after a sharp chase, part of which was through thick wait-a-bit thorn cover, I brought eight or nine fine bulls to bay in lofty reeds at the river's margin, exactly opposite to my camp : of these I singled out the two best heads, one of which I shot with five balls, and wounded the other badly, but he made off while I was engaged with his comrade.

In the morning I instructed four of my people to cross the river, and bring over a supply of buffalo beef. These men were very reluctant to go, fearing a lion might have taken possession of the carcase. On proceeding to reconnoitre from our side, they beheld the majestic beast they dreaded walk slowly up the opposite bank from the dead buffalo, and take up a position on the top of the bank under some shady thorn-trees. I resolved to give him battle, and rode forth with my double-barrelled Westley Richards rifle, followed by men leading the dogs. Present, who was one of the party, carried his *roer*, no doubt to perform wonders. The wind blew up the river ; I held up to seek a drift, and crossed a short distance above where the buffalo lay. As we drew near the spot, I observed the lion sitting on the top of the bank, exactly where he had last been seen by my people. On my right, and within two hundred yards of me, was a

very extensive troop of pallahs, which antelope invariably manages to be in the way when it is not at all wanted. On this occasion, however, I succeeded in preventing my dogs from observing them. When the lion saw us coming, he overhauled us for a moment, and then slunk down the bank for concealment; being well to leeward of him, I ordered the dogs to be slipped, and galloped forward.

On finding that he was attacked, the lion at first made a most determined bolt for it, followed by all the dogs at a racing pace; and when they came up with him he would not bay, but continued his course down the bank of the river, keeping close in beside the reeds, growling terribly at the dogs, which kept up an incessant angry barking. The bank of the river was intersected by deep watercourses, and, the ground being extremely slippery from the rain which had fallen during the night, I was unable to overtake him until he came to bay in a patch of lofty dense reeds which grew on the lower bank, immediately adjacent to the river's margin. I had brought out eleven of my dogs, and before I could come up three of them were killed. On reaching the spot I found it impossible to obtain the smallest glimpse of the lion, although the ground favoured me, I having the upper bank to stand upon; so, dismounting from my horse, I tried to guess, from his horrid growling, his exact position, and fired several shots on chance, but none of these hit

him. I then commenced pelting him with lumps of earth and sticks, there being no stones at hand. This had the effect of making him shift his position, but he still kept in the densest part of the reeds, where I could do nothing with him.

Presently my followers came up, who, as a matter of course, at once established themselves safely in the tops of thorn-trees. After about ten minutes' bullying, the lion seemed to consider his quarters too hot for him, and suddenly made a rush to escape from his persecutors, continuing his course down along the edge of the river. The dogs, however, again gave him chase, and soon brought him to bay in another dense patch of reeds, just as bad as the last. Out of this in a few minutes I managed to start him, when he bolted up the river, and came to bay in a narrow strip of reeds. Here he lay so close that for a long time I could not ascertain his whereabouts; at length, however, he made a charge among the dogs, and, coming forward, took up a position near the outside of the reeds, where for the first time I was enabled to give him a shot. My ball entered his body a little behind the shoulder. On receiving it he charged growling after the dogs, but not farther than the edge of the reeds, out of which he was extremely reluctant to move. I gave him a second shot, firing for his head; my ball entered at the edge of his eye, and passed through the back of the roof of his mouth.

The lion then sprang up, and, facing about, dashed through the reeds, and plunged into the river, across which he swam, dyeing the waters with his blood; one black dog, named "Schwart," alone pursued him. A huge crocodile, attracted by the blood, followed in their wake, but fortunately did not take my dog, which I much feared he would do. Present fired at the lion as he swam, and missed him; both my barrels were empty. Before, however, the lion could make the opposite bank, I had one loaded without patch, and just as his feet gained the ground I made a fine shot at his neck, and turned him over dead on the spot. Present, Carollus, and Adonis then swam in and brought him through. We landed him by an old hippopotamus footpath, and, the day being damp and cold, we kindled a fire, beside which we skinned him. While this was going forward I had a painful duty to perform, viz. to load one barrel, and blow out Rascality's brains, whom the lion had utterly disabled in his after-quarters. Thus ended this protracted and all but unsuccessful hunt; for when I at length managed to shoot him, the dogs were quite tired of it, and, the reeds being green, I could not have set them on fire to force him out.

The lion proved to be a first-rate one; he was in the prime of life, and had an exquisitely beautiful coat of hair. His mane was not very rank; his awful teeth were quite perfect, a thing which in lions of his age is rather unusual; and he had the finest tuft of hair on the end of his tail that

I had ever seen in a lion. In the chase my after-rider, who fortunately did not carry my rifle, got a tremendous capsize from bad riding, a common occurrence with most after-riders who have been employed in my service. The afternoon was spent in drying the wet mane of the lion, skinning out the feet, and preserving the skin with alum and arsenical soap.

On the 27th we reached the junction of the Mariqua with the Limpopo, when we once more bade farewell to the latter, and held up the northern bank of the Mariqua. This fine little river averages here about five or six yards in width, and meanders along in a very serpentine course through a very broad open vley, its banks being in many places destitute of cover, excepting reeds, and in others is densely clad with groves of thorn and willow trees, &c. Here I found reitbuck, which do not frequent the Limpopo in those parts which I have visited. The country looked fresh and green, and all the usual varieties of game were abundant. Elephants had been frequenting the district some months previously, but had now deserted it. About fifty miles to the south and east a very bold and rocky extensive blue mountain-chain towered in grand relief above the intervening level forest. The length of this mountain chain seemed to be about a hundred miles, its course about north-east, and it gradually became loftier and more rugged towards the north-eastern extremity. I believe the Limpopo rises somewhere to the east of this

chain, and I felt a strong desire to follow it to its source, but under existing circumstances this measure was not advisable. On the march we passed a small village of Bakalahari, which was surrounded with heaps of bones and skulls of game.

Next day we marched about eight miles up the river, and outspanned in a wide open vley. On the march I shot one sassaby, and wounded two black rhinoceroses. In the afternoon I rode up the edge of the river with Ruyter, in quest of reitbuck, of which I saw several small troops, but did not kill any, not getting a chance of the old bucks, which I hunted for their heads. I, however, shot one enormous crocodile, which we discovered fast asleep on the grassy bank of the river. He got two balls, one in the brains, and the other behind the shoulder, yet nevertheless in the struggles of death he managed to roll into the water, and disappeared. I was extremely surprised to see so enormous a crocodile in so small a stream; his length was considerably greater than the width of the river at the spot where I shot him.

Marched again at sunrise, and I and Ruyter rode ahead to seek reitbuck. I detected one of these squatting beside the river to shun observation, and I shot him dead on the spot. He proved to be an old buck, but, both of his horns being broken in fighting, I did not keep the head. A little after this, two packs of wild dogs kept trotting and cantering slowly along before us,

one on either side of the river ; we had started them from two pallahs, which they had caught and were consuming. More reitbuck were seen, and presently an old buck, carrying unusually fine horns, started up before us in company with four does. By taking up a position in a hollow in the vley, and sending Ruyter to drive them towards me, I had the satisfaction to succeed in bowling over this fine old buck, which proved to be a princely specimen. I shot him running, and broke his back.

The waggons being opposite to us, we crossed the river, and deposited the head on my cardell ; and having proceeded a short distance farther up, we discovered the fresh spoor of an immense herd of elephants, consisting mostly of old bulls. I drew up my waggons on a peninsular well-wooded spot, and proceeded to take up the spoor. These elephants had at first fed for many hours among thorns in the vicinity of the river, and then marched in a long string right away out of the country. After following the spoor for a great many miles I became annoyed, and gave it up.

On the 31st, as I was riding along the river's bank, about two miles below the spot where some days before I had fired at a large crocodile, I came upon a similar reptile lying asleep on the opposite side, which I shot dead on the spot, putting the ball through the spine close into the back of the head. On receiving the ball,

he only made a slight convulsive movement, and then remained still and motionless as if still asleep, not having in the slightest degree altered his position: a copious stream of blood issued from the wound, and coloured the shallow water in which he lay. Having crossed the river at a drift about a mile below, I rode up to inspect this hideous monster of the river, which, to my surprise, I found to be the same one at which, on the 28th, I had fired, and as I supposed killed. He bore the marks of both my bullets, one of which had fractured a part of his skull. The crocodile was a very old fellow, and a fine specimen, its length being upwards of twelve feet. I resolved, therefore, to preserve the skin, and with this intention, in the forenoon, I marched down six men, who were occupied until sundown in the novel work of flaying the crocodile. When, however, they had accomplished their undertaking, I made up my mind that we should not be able to preserve the entire skin, and determined only to keep the head, which we brought to camp. The night set in with a heavy storm of wind, accompanied with rain. Returning from skinning the crocodile to camp, I found the vley before me black with an immense herd of buffaloes, two of which I wounded, but did not follow.

A few days after this, just as Swint had milked the cows, and was driving them from the wooded peninsula in which we lay, athwart the open ground, to graze with

my other cattle in the forest beyond, he beheld four majestic lions walk slowly across the vley, a few hundred yards below my camp, and disappear over the river's bank, at a favourite drinking-place. These mighty monarchs of the waste had been holding a prolonged repast over the carcasses of some zebras killed by Present, and had now come down to the river to slake their thirst. This being reported, I instantly saddled up two horses, and, directing my boys to lead after me as quickly as possible my small remaining pack of sore-footed dogs, I rode forth, accompanied by Carey carrying a spare gun, to give battle to the four grim lions. As I rode out of the peninsula, they showed themselves on the bank of the river, and, guessing that their first move would be a disgraceful retreat, I determined to ride so as to make them think that I had not observed them, until I should be able to cut off their retreat from the river, across the open vley, to the endless forest beyond. That point being gained, I knew that they, still doubtful of my having observed them, would hold their ground on the river's bank until my dogs came up, when I could more advantageously make the attack.

I cantered along, holding as if I meant to pass the lions at a distance of a quarter of a mile, until I was opposite to them, when I altered my course, and inclined a little nearer. The lions then showed symptoms of uneasiness; they rose to their feet, and,

overhauling us for half a minute, disappeared over the bank. They reappeared, however, directly, a little farther down; and finding that their present position was bare, they walked majestically along the top of the bank to a spot a few hundred yards lower, where the bank was well wooded. Here they seemed half inclined to await my attack; two stretched out their massive arms, and lay down in the grass, and the other two sat up like dogs upon their haunches. Deeming it probable that when my dogs came up and I approached they would still retreat and make a bolt across the open vley, I directed Carey to canter forward and take up the ground in the centre of the vley about four hundred yards in advance; whereby the lions would be compelled either to give us battle or swim the river, which, although narrow, I knew they would be very reluctant to do.

I now sat in my saddle, anxiously awaiting the arrival of the dogs; and whilst thus momentarily disengaged, I was much struck with the majestic and truly appalling appearance which these four noble lions exhibited. They were all full-grown immense males; and I felt, I must confess, a little nervous, and very uncertain as to what might be the issue of the attack. When the dogs came up I rode right in towards the lions. They sprang to their feet, and trotted slowly down along the bank of the river, once or twice halting and facing about for half a minute. Immediately below them there was

a small determined bend in the stream, forming a sort of peninsula. Into this bend they disappeared, and next moment I was upon them with my dogs. They had taken shelter in a dense angle of the peninsula, well sheltered by high trees and reeds. Into this retreat the dogs at once boldly followed them, making a loud barking, which was instantly followed by the terrible voices of the lions, which turned about and charged to the edge of the cover. Next moment, however, I heard them plunge into the river, when I sprang from my horse, and, running to the top of the bank, I saw three of them ascending the opposite bank, the dogs following. One of them bounded away across the open plain at top speed, but the other two, finding themselves followed by the dogs, immediately turned to bay. It was now my turn, so, taking them coolly right and left with my little rifle, I made the most glorious double shot that a sportsman's heart could desire, disabling them both in the shoulder before they were even aware of my position. Then snatching my other gun from Carey, who that moment had ridden up to my assistance, I finished the first lion with a shot about the heart, and brought the second to a standstill by disabling him in his hind quarters. He quickly crept into a dense, wide, dark green bush, in which for a long time it was impossible to obtain a glimpse of him. At length, a clod of earth falling near his hiding-place, he made a move which disclosed to

me his position, when I finished him with three more shots, all along the middle of his back. Carey swam across the river to flog off the dogs ; and when these came through to me, I beat up the peninsula in quest of the fourth lion, which had, however, made off. We then crossed the river a little higher up, and proceeded to inspect the noble prizes I had won. Both lions were well up in their years ; I kept the skin and skull of the finest specimen, and only the nails and tail of the other, one of whose canine teeth was worn down to the socket with caries, which seemed very much to have affected his general condition.

On the 9th it rained unceasingly throughout the day, converting the rich soil on which we were encamped into one mass of soft sticky clay. In the forenoon, fearing the rain would continue so as to render the vley (through which we must pass to gain the firmer ground) impassable, I ordered my men to prepare to march, and leave the tent with its contents standing, the point which I wished to gain being distant only about five hundred yards. When the oxen were inspanned, however, and we attempted to move, we found my tackle, which was old, so rotten from the effects of the rain, that something gave way at every strain. Owing to this and to the softness of the vley, we laboured on till sundown, and only succeeded in bringing one waggon to its destination, the other two remaining fast in the mud in the middle of the

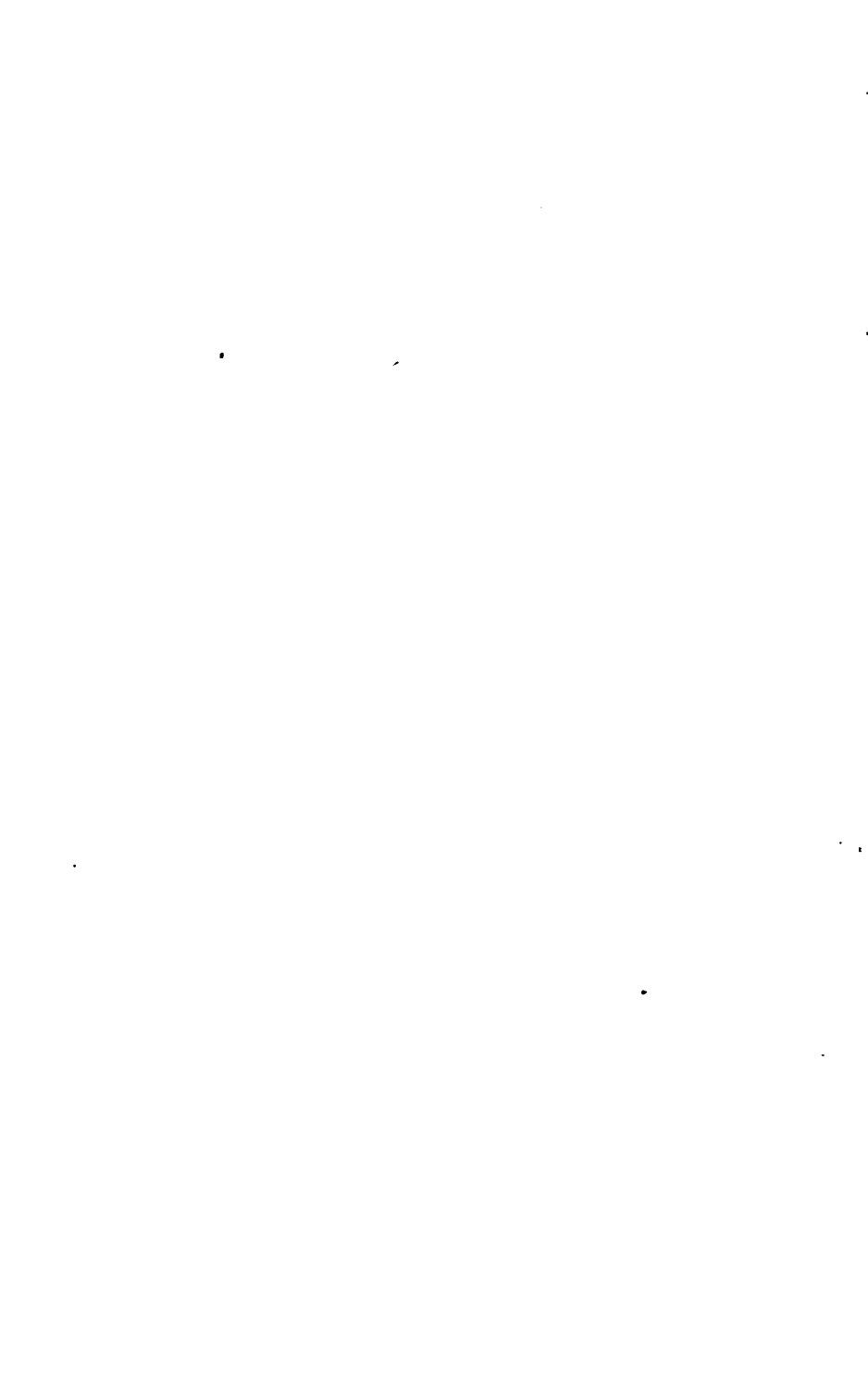
vley. Next morning, luckily, the weather cleared up, when my men brought over the tent, and in the afternoon the other two waggons.

We followed up the banks of the river for several days with the usual allowance of sport. On the 16th we came suddenly upon an immense old bull muchocho rolling in mud. He sprang to his feet immediately he saw me, and, charging up the bank, so frightened our horses, that before I could get my rifle from my after-rider he was past us. I then gave him chase; and after a hard gallop of about a mile I sprang from my horse and gave him a good shot behind the shoulder. At this moment a cow rhinoceros of the same species, with her calf, charged out of some wait-a-bit thorn-cover, and stood right in my path. Observing that she carried an unusually long horn, I turned my attention from the bull to her; and after a very long and severe chase I dropped her at the sixth shot. I carried one of my rifles, which gave me much trouble, that not being the tool required for this sort of work, where quick loading is indispensable.

After breakfast I sent men to cut off the head of this rhinoceros, and proceeded with Ruyter to take up the spoor of the bull wounded in the morning. We found that he was very severely hit, and, having followed the spoor for about a mile through very dense thorn-cover, he suddenly rustled out of the bushes close ahead of us, accompanied by a whole host of rhinoceros birds. I



Hunting the White Rhinoceros.



mounted my horse and gave him chase, and in a few minutes he had received four severe shots. I managed to turn his course towards camp, when I ceased firing, as he seemed to be nearly done up, and Ruyter and I rode slowly behind him, occasionally shouting to guide his course. Presently, however, Chukuroo ceased taking any notice of us, and held leisurely on for the river, into a shallow part of which he walked, and after panting there and turning about for a quarter of an hour he fell over and expired. This was a remarkably fine old bull, and from his dentition it was not improbable that a hundred summers had seen him roaming a peaceful denizen of the forests and open glades along the fair banks of the secluded Mariqua.

During our march on the 19th we had to cross a range of very rocky hills, covered with large loose stones; and all hands were required to be actively employed for about an hour in clearing them out of the way to permit the waggons to pass. The work went on fast and furious, and the quantity of stones cleared was immense. At length we reached the spot where we were obliged to bid adieu to the Mariqua, and hold a westerly course across country for Sichely. At sundown we halted under a lofty mountain, the highest in the district, called "Lynché a Chény," or the Monkey's Mountain.

Next day at an early hour I rode out with Ruyter to hunt; my camp being entirely without flesh, and we had

been rationed upon very tough old rhinoceros for several days past. It was a cloudy morning, and soon after starting it came on to rain heavily. I however held on, skirting a fine well-wooded range of mountains, and after riding several miles I shot a zebra. Having covered the carcase well over with branches to protect it from the vultures, I returned to camp, and, inspanning my wag-gons, took it up on the march. We continued trekking on until sundown, when we started an immense herd of buffaloes, into which I stalked and shot a huge old bull.

Our march this evening was through the most beautiful country I had ever seen in Africa. We skirted along an endless range of well-wooded stony mountains lying on our left, whilst to our right the country at first sloped gently off, and then stretched away into a level green forest (occasionally interspersed with open glades), boundless as the ocean. This green forest was, however, relieved in one direction by a chain of excessively bold, detached, well-wooded, rocky, pyramidal mountains, which stood forth in grand relief. In advance the picture was bounded by forest and mountain; one bold acclivity, in shape a dome, standing prominent among its fellows. It was a lovely evening: the sky, overcast and gloomy, threw an interesting, wild, mysterious colouring over the landscape. I gazed forth upon the romantic scene before me with intense delight, and felt melancholy and sorrowful at passing so fleetingly through it, and I could not

help shouting out as I marched along, "Where is the coward who would not dare to die for such a land?"

In the morning we held for a fountain some miles ahead in a gorge in the mountains. As we approached the fountain, and were passing close in under a steep rocky hill side, well wooded to its summit, I unexpectedly beheld a lion stealing up the rocky face, and, halting behind a tree, he stood overhauling us for some minutes. I resolved to give him battle, and seizing my rifle marched against him, followed by Carey carrying a spare gun, and by three men leading my dogs, now reduced to eight. When we got close in to the base of the mountain, we found ourselves enveloped in dense jungle, which extended half way to its summit, and entirely obscured from our eyes objects which were quite apparent from the waggon. I slipped my dogs, however, which, after snuffing about, took right up the steep face on the spoor of the lions, for there was a troop of them—a lion and three lionesses.

The people at the waggon saw the chase in perfection. When the lions observed the dogs coming on, they took right up, and three of them crossed over the sky ridge. The dogs, however, turned one rattling old lioness, which came rumbling down through the cover, close past me. I ran to meet her, and she came to bay in an open spot near the base of the mountain, whither I quickly followed; and coming up within thirty yards, bowled her over with

my first shot, which broke her back. My second entered her shoulder ; and fearing that she might hurt any of the dogs, as she still evinced signs of life, I finished her with a third in the breast. The bellies of all the four lions were much distended by some game they had been gorging, no doubt a buffalo, as a large herd started out of the jungle immediately under the spot where the noble beasts were first disturbed.

Showers of rain fell every hour throughout the 24th, so I employed my men in making feldtschoens, or in other words African brogues, for me. These shoes were worthy of a sportsman, being light, yet strong, and were entirely composed of the skins of game of my shooting. The soles were made of either buffalo or camelopard ; the front part perhaps of koodoo, or hartebeest, or bushbuck ; and the back of the shoe of lion, or hyæna, or sable antelope ; while the rheimpy or thread with which the whole was sewn consisted of a thin strip of the skin of a steinbok.

On the forenoon of the 26th I rode forth to hunt, accompanied by Ruyter ; we held west, skirting the wooded stony mountains. The natives had here many years before waged successful war with elephants, four of whose skulls I found. Presently I came across two sassaybys, one of which I knocked over ; but while I was loading he regained his legs, and made off. We crossed a level stretch of forest, holding a northerly

course for an opposite range of green well-wooded hills and valleys. I came upon a troop of six fine old bull buffaloes, into which I stalked, and wounded one princely fellow very severely behind the shoulder, bringing blood from his mouth ; he, however, made off with his comrades, and, the ground being very rough, we failed to overtake him. After following the spoor for a couple of miles we dropped it, as it led right away from camp.

Returning from this chase, we had an adventure with another old bull buffalo, which shows the extreme danger of hunting buffaloes without dogs. We started him in a green hollow among the hills, and, his course inclining for camp, I gave him chase. He crossed the level broad strath and made for the opposite densely wooded range of mountains. Along the base of these, we followed him, sometimes in view, sometimes on the spoor, keeping the old fellow at a pace which made him pant. At length, finding himself much distressed, he had recourse to a singular stratagem. Doubling round some thick bushes which obscured him from our view, he found himself beside a small pool of rain-water, just deep enough to cover his body ; into this he walked, and, facing about, lay gently down and awaited our on-coming, with nothing but his old grey face and massive horns above the water, and these concealed from view by rank overhanging herbage.

Our attention was entirely engrossed with the spoor,

and thus we rode boldly on until within a few feet of him, when, springing to his feet, he made a desperate charge after Ruyter, uttering a low stifled roar peculiar to buffaloes (somewhat similar to the growl of a lion), and hurled horse and rider to the earth with fearful violence. His horn laid the poor horse's haunch open to the bone, making the most fearful rugged wound. In an instant Ruyter regained his feet, and ran for his life; which the buffalo observing, gave chase, but most fortunately came down with a tremendous somersault in the mud, his feet slipping from under him: thus the Bushman escaped certain destruction. The buffalo rose much discomfited, and, the wounded horse first catching his eye, he went a second time after him, but he got out of the way. At this moment I managed to send one of my patent pacificating pills into his shoulder, when he instantly quitted the field of action, and sought shelter in the dense cover on the mountain side, whither I deemed it imprudent to follow him.

On the 28th we marched at sunrise, when one of my waggon-drivers chose to turn his waggon too short, in opposition to my orders, whereby it was very nearly upset, for which I flogged him with a jambok, and then knocked him down. This man's name was Adonis: he was a determined old sinner on whom words had no effect. Our course lay through a wide, well-wooded strath, beautifully varied with open glades. As we proceeded,



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Furious Charge of a Buffalo.

fresh spoor of buffalo and camelopard became abundant, and about breakfast-time, as we were crossing an elevated slope in the vicinity of the Ngotwani, I had the felicity to detect a magnificent herd of the latter browsing in the middle of the strath about half a mile to our left.

As I had enjoyed very little sport with camelopard either in this or in last expedition, my time and attention having always been engrossed with elephants, I resolved to avail myself of this opportunity, and accordingly, having caught a couple of my mares, I rode for them, accompanied by Booi as after-rider. I had directed my men to outspan, and my intention was, if possible, to hunt one of the camelopards to my camp, but in this I failed. On disturbing the herd they separated into two divisions, one of which took right away down wind, being a tail-on-end chase from my camp; the finest bull went with this division, and him I followed. After a sharp burst of about a mile I headed and laid him low with two shots behind the shoulder. Having cut off his tail, we were returning to camp, and had proceeded about half way, when we came upon the other division of the herd. They were browsing quietly in company with a large herd of zebras; and observing amongst them another princely old bull, nothing short of the one I had already killed, I was tempted once more to give chase, and, directing Booi to go home with the tail, I spurred my

little mare, and dashed after the lofty giraffe. In vain he sought the thickest depths of cover which the strath afforded, and put out the very utmost speed which he could muster. I followed close in his wake, and, after a hard chase of about a mile over very rough ground, we gained a piece of hard level. Here I pressed my mare, and, getting close in under his stern, I fired at the gallop, and sent a bullet into him, and then passed; in doing which I tried to fire a second shot, but my gun snapped. I had now headed the camelopard, so he altered his course and held away at a right angle across the level strath. A fresh cap was soon placed upon the nipple, when, pressing my mare, I once more rode past him. In passing I held my stock to my waist and fired: the ball entered behind the shoulder and ended the career of this gigantic and exquisitely beautiful habitant of the forest. Having run a few yards farther, his lofty frame tottered for a moment, when he came down with a crash which made the earth tremble.

On the 4th of December we inspanned at sunrise and marched to the Ngotwani, which we crossed after an hour of hard work in making a road; having to remove some immense masses of rock, to cut down the banks with spades, and to throw some thorn-trees. In the afternoon I again marched, and halted at sundown within a few miles of my old spoor near the Poort or Pass of God. As the waggons were drawing up for the night a borèlé was

detected, which Present and Carey stalked, and got within thirty yards, and then both fired and returned, stating that they had broken his shoulder.

Accordingly, on the following morning, I proceeded to take up the spoor of the wounded borèlé of the preceding evening, accompanied by Ruyter, and I very soon found that he was very little the worse for his wound. The spoor led me for several miles close along under the mountain-range to my right, and at length up into a long well-wooded basin in the mountains. I observed that two lions, having detected the blood, were spooring up the borèlé; they had followed him up and driven him away from his lair, and had then lain down for the day.

When I came up I was within twenty yards of the lions before I was aware of their proximity. Observing me, they sprang to their feet, and, growling sulkily, trotted up the mountain-side. I only saw one of them at first, and ran forward for a shot. Having ascended the steep a short distance, the lion halted to have a look, giving me a fine broadside, when I shot him through the heart. On receiving the ball he bounded forward, and was instantly obscured by the trees. I advanced cautiously, and next moment the other lion sprang up with a growl, and marched with an air of most consummate independence up the mountain-side. I imagined that this lion was the one I had fired at, and I sent two more shots at him, both of which were too high; after which

he disappeared over a ridge immediately above. On proceeding to inspect the spot where the lion had been lying, I found that there were two beds, consequently that there must have been two lions, and I conjectured that I had killed one of them. In case, however, he should be only wounded, I deemed it prudent to ride down to the waggons, which were then passing below me, to obtain some dogs to pioneer. Having procured these, I and Ruyter returned to the spot, and found the lion lying dead on the mountain-side. We proceeded to skin him, and returned to the waggons with the spoils. The other decamped; the dogs could not find him. Both of these were first-rate old lions, but the one that escaped was the larger of the two. In the afternoon I rode on to Sichely's kraal on the Kouloubeng, having directed my men to follow with the waggons.

On arriving at the station I found that Mr. Livingstone had left that morning to visit a tribe to the east of the Limpopo. I waited upon Mrs. Livingstone, who regaled me with tea and bread and butter, and gave me all the news. I remained a week in the station, and on the 12th I inspanned. At sundown we halted near the Pass of God, intending to hunt sable antelope, having seen a small troop of them in the month of May on a steep mountain-side, beneath which I formed my camp.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

The Pass of God — Hunt Sable and Roan Antelope — Sesetabie — My Cattle-losses in five Expeditions — My Cattle desperate for want of Water — Trading with Mahura — Inspanning young Oxen — We cross the Vaal River — The Country densely covered with Game — An Ostrich's Nest — Bloem Vonteyn — Multitudes of Antelope Skeletons cover the Plains — The Great Orange River — We are detained by the Flood — Twenty-three Men drowned in attempting to cross — We have to take the Waggon to pieces — Arrival at Colesberg — Determine to re-visit Old England and transport my collection of Trophies thither.

NEXT morning I rode through the Pass of God and held west, accompanied by two after-riders. I rode to within a couple of miles of the Kouloubeng, and returned close in under the mountain-chain to the south of the pass. I went forth on foot, accompanied by Ruyter, and ascended the mountain immediately above my camp to seek for sable antelope. I had the satisfaction to discover the spoor of three bucks on a piece of rocky table-ground on the highest summit of the range; and soon after I started a princely old buck from his lair. He was lying in long grass in a sandy spot behind a bush, within eighty yards of me. Starting from his mountain-bed, this gem of beauty

rattled up a rocky slope beside which he had been lying, and, halting for a moment, looked back to see what had disturbed him, when I sent a bullet through his ribs, and as he disappeared over the ridge I lodged another in his vitals. Having loaded, I followed on the spoor, and soon I observed him within a hundred and fifty yards of me, standing in a green hollow far below, whisking his tail and evidently severely wounded. A strong breeze which was then blowing was against me, as it shook a young tree of which I wished to avail myself for a rest. I nevertheless managed to make a fine shot, and sent a bullet through the centre of his shoulder, bringing him down on his face, and laming him. The potaquine disappeared down the wooded mountain-side over a rocky ridge, but no rude fears agitated my breast; I had lamed him, and that was enough: if stalking should fail, there were dogs at my waggons that could very soon bring him to bay. I did not, however, wish to be put to the trouble of sending for the dogs, and continued to follow on his spoor with extreme caution. He had only gone a short distance down the hill when I found him without his seeing me, and, after a successful stalk, I finished him with three more shots, two of which were in his stern. This was a most splendid specimen of this very rare and most lovely antelope; his horns were enormous, very long, rough, and perfect. Having cut off the head for stuffing, and gralloched him, we covered him with many green boughs, and

returned to camp, whence I despatched a party for the venison and the skin, which I preserved.

On the 15th I was occupied during the morning in stuffing the head of the sable antelope, after which I rode forth with two after-riders, and holding a northerly course I skirted the range of hills beneath which we were encamped. I soon reached a gorge in the hills, through which I rode, and at its upper extremity I discovered springs of water forming a little stream. In a basin in the hill-side opposite to this little stream I observed a rattling old buck roan antelope, or bastard gemsbok, standing under the shade of some young trees, the sun being extremely powerful. I first endeavoured to stalk in upon him, but, finding that the ground would not admit of that, I laid a plot for him, and, guessing from the lay of the land what course he was most likely to take, I instructed Ruyter to give me about twenty minutes to steal forward, and then to endeavour to move him towards me. Before, however, I could gain the point I wished, an eddy in the breeze apprised the roan antelope of my proximity, when he instantly started to pass a shoulder of the mountain opposite which I already was. As I was screened by some thorn-trees, I made a run to save the day. When the buck halted, I likewise halted; and when he ran, I also ran: thus, when he halted the second time, and looked down to see what had disturbed him, I had got within two hundred yards, and was standing in

position, with my rifle steady on a branch of a thorn-tree. Giving it six inches of elevation, I fired, and the bullet caught him in the centre of the hollow behind the shoulder, and rested in the hide on his opposite side. Arching his back and bounding high, the rock-loving old roan antelope started forward, and was instantly concealed from my view by an abrupt rocky ridge. Having loaded, I inspected the spoor. Large blotches of his life-blood stained the rocks, and, on clearing the ridge over which he had disappeared, I had the pleasure to find "Qualala" stretched to rise no more. This antelope carried the finest head I had ever seen; the horns were very long, fair set, immensely stout, and rough. I cut off the head for stuffing, and rode back to camp, where I found a trader named Jolly, with his waggon, who wished to travel along with me to the colony, being in fear of the rebel Boers.

Having heard from Mr. Livingstone that sable antelopes frequented the rocky mountains about the sources of the Kouloubeng, I resolved to march thither. Early on the 18th we inspanned, and in about four hours encamped on the Kouloubeng, at a spot where, three years before, Mr. Livingstone had made a garden to cultivate wheat, which, having sown, he left to the birds, having never returned to see how it had thriven.

In the morning I rode forth with the Bushman, and, holding a south-westerly course, examined the mountain-ranges and several fine straths in that direction. At

length I started a small troop of zebras, and soon after I observed a fine old buck roan antelope, which got my wind. Returning from following this buck, I shot a steinbok; this shot at the steinbok started a troop of seven or eight old bull buffaloes, which Ruyter had found, from the summit of a rocky hillock. I followed, when the invariable rhinoceros birds started them, and I galloped on in their wake.

Presently they halted to look behind them, and I at the same instant sprang from my mare and lay down in the grass. My mare commenced eating the grass and whisking her tail, which the buffaloes observing, and fancying that she was some species of game, made up their minds that it was all right, and coming forward a few steps they took up a position under a wide shady tree, not evincing any further signs of fear. Thus I was enabled to take my time and select the finest head in the troop. After about twenty minutes spent in studying the set of the heads, I shot one princely old bull, when they all made off. Following on their spoor for a short distance, I found my bull lying dying beneath a thorn-tree, and his comrades standing near him. As the old bull died, he roared loudly, as buffaloes are wont to do. His comrades came forward and walked round him, smelling the blood, when I wounded two more, and a little after a third, which the natives discovered on the following day. On returning to camp I despatched men for the head of the buffalo and a supply of meat.

Next day, whilst exploring a fine mountainous tract of country to the south-west, I suddenly found myself in my old waggon-spoor of '45, within a short distance of the bold gorge in the mountains in which my oxen had been chased by lions. In this fine pass two streams of water meet: it is a first-rate district for game when the country has not been ransacked by Griqua hunters. I immediately found the spoor of a troop of buffaloes; it led me into a rich, green, and well-wooded glen in the hills, through which one of the afore-mentioned streams flowed. The wind was as foul as it could blow, and this troop got my wind. Returning from spooring them, however, I very soon fell in with another troop, reposing under dense shade in the same glen. I crept in within thirty yards of them, and there lay for upwards of an hour, endeavouring to select the finest head. The buffalo which I wanted was lying down, his body screened by stout thorn-branches. I might easily have shot any of the others through the heart, if I had wished to do so. One by one they rose, stretched themselves, rubbed their horns upon the trees, and again lay down. At length something, which I could not guess, alarmed them, when the buffalo I wanted sprang to his feet, affording me a certain shot, but my cap disappointed me. I then had a snap shot through the cover with my left barrel, and sent a bullet through his heart.

The herd took to the hills, and, by an extraordinary

chance, I again fell in with them, while galloping along, half-way to my camp. Dismounting, I ran in after them, and, commanding their attention by a shrill whistle, the herd halted and faced half about, when I dropped a fine old cow with a single ball. On returning to camp I found a party of Baquaines, among whom was a brother of Sichely's. These men informed me that the Boers had been making many inquiries concerning me; and that they had stated that it was their intention to come in force on horseback, and take me prisoner. The Bechuanas, however, further stated that all the horses of the Boers were dead with the distemper. An attack from them being, however, by no means improbable, I deemed it prudent to hold myself in a certain degree prepared, and resolved, in the event of Mr. Edwards, the missionary at Bakatla, thinking the road by the Mamouri unsafe, to hold a more westerly course, and go out by the country of the Bawangketse. Another valuable black shooting-mare died of the fell distemper.

My losses in cattle this year were very considerable. Up to this time fourteen horses and fifteen head of cattle had died; making my losses in all four expeditions into the far interior amount to forty-five horses and seventy head of cattle, the value of these being at least 600*l*. I also lost about seventy of my dogs.

We continued our march for several days through a country abounding in different kinds of game, affording

good sport ; and on the 1st of January, 1849, I rode into Bakatla, where I found Mr. Edwards and his family flourishing. The news was, that the Boers had met the Governor and the troops, &c., at a place called Boom Plaats, on the north side of the Orange River, and, after a bloody engagement of three hours, they had been defeated. Mr. Edwards stated that since this engagement the Boers had been flocking in about Mosega in great numbers, and that they were anxious to get possession of my waggons. He therefore advised me strongly not to proceed by my old line of march, but to get out of the country with all speed, taking the direct road across the mountain at the back of Bakatla. My prospects of doing this, however, were not heightened by an attack in the morning of fever brought on by over exertion and anxiety of mind.

On the 3rd we marched at dawn, and, after proceeding for many miles without finding water at the different spots where we were led to expect it, we had the pleasing prospect before us of not seeing any until the following day, when we might reach the Molopo. The sun's heat was most terrific, and my poor dogs were already on the verge of going mad ; a number of my cattle were lame from hoof-sickness, and I myself was laid up with a rattling fever. In this state of things I halted the waggons, and despatched parties in different directions with spades to seek for water. To my great

relief, Jolly rode up, and said that half a mile in advance there were several sheltered holes, containing sufficient rain-water for all the cattle; thither we accordingly moved with all speed. An attack from the Boers being not at all improbable, I ordered all my guns and rifles to be cleaned and loaded, and ammunition to be placed in readiness for action. I had also four good muskets cleaned and loaded, which in all gave me twenty shots at the first round; these, if well directed, in the open country, I calculated would keep off a whole host of Boers.

I pushed on the waggons as rapidly as I could, considering that the country was almost destitute of water, my cattle consequently being in a desperate condition; and in the afternoon of the 13th I reached the Hart River, where I outspanned within a quarter of a mile of the town or kraal of the Batlapis. The river was greatly swollen and quite impassable, the rain having been very heavy in certain parts of the country. Shortly after we arrived old Mahura with a party made his appearance, and came down to greet me across the river, and beg for some coffee.

In the morning, by Mahura's request, I inspanned and crossed the Hart stream, and encamped on its southern bank. In the course of the day I obtained ten karosses in barter from the tribe, and one very good spotted cat as a present from the chief. I also obtained a large

sack of Kaffir corn in barter for beads, and milk was pressed upon us to any amount. A few fine oxen were offered for barter, but I did not require them, preferring to purchase karosses. Mahura favoured me with a visit morning and evening, remaining at the waggons about three hours on each occasion, drinking coffee to an immense extent, and pestering me with requests for various articles of which he stood in need.

On the 16th I deemed it high time to be getting under way, being quite sick of the presence of Mahura and his retinue, who came down to my waggons and remained there for the greater part of the day, merely to eat and drink and pester me, not bringing any articles of value for barter, and asking absurdly high prices. Accordingly at an early hour I ordered my men to count my cattle and inspan, and in about an hour we were on the move. Old Mahura was coming down to drink coffee, and met us as we were going past the town. He was evidently vexed at my sudden departure; I presented him with some coffee, sugar, and other articles equivalent in value to the kaross which he had given me, and took leave of him. In the afternoon we marched about six or seven miles nearer to the Vaal, and halted in the hollow where nearly ten months before I had coursed an old blue wildebeest with dogs.

Considerable delay was caused next day along the line of march by young oxen, which could not be persuaded

to trek, although flogged until their sides and flanks were red with gore. About four hours after the sun rose we reached the fount beside a few acres of bush, where we outspanned. Our march was across boundless open country; we saw a good deal of game, blue and black wildebeest, blesbok, springbok, and a fine troop of about thirty hartebeests: in the afternoon I again marched, and at nightfall we encamped on the bank of the fair Vaal river. It was considerably swollen, heavy rains having lately fallen; but being upon the ebb, I deemed it well not to take the drift until the morrow; when, having arranged two trektows, we commenced crossing the Vaal, one waggon at a time, with twenty oxen, and in about two hours my three heavily-laden waggons were brought through in safety.

After two or three days' march we came in sight of several Boer encampments on both sides of the Vet River. Four Boers paid me a visit and drank coffee with me; I questioned them concerning the recent engagement between the rebels and the English. They said that nearly all the latter had fallen on that occasion and only six Boers, and told us many other equally extravagant tales. It was however very clear from their remarks that the Boers had received a lesson which they would not soon forget of the utter vanity of opposition to the English Government.

On the 24th our morning's march brought us into the

district where in the commencement of last winter I had seen such overwhelming swarms of blesboks : Boers were encamped on the opposite side of the river. I outspanned beside some shady thorn-trees ; lion's spoor was seen on the line of march. In the afternoon I lost my march, being obliged to halt soon after I inspanned to correct a bush of the iron-axletree waggon, which was loose.

The 25th was a cloudy morning, with a cool breeze. Our morning's march brought us to a forsaken Boer encampment, around which lay the remains of the different varieties of game frequenting the district. We halted for breakfast beside several acres of thorn-cover on the bank of the river.

As we were breakfasting on the 24th by the banks of the river, a trader from the Parl (a district near Cape Town), of French extraction, passed us with his two waggons laden with merchandise. He took a cup of tea with me and gave me the news of the colony. Observing the skull of an old bull buffalo fastened on one of my traps, he asked me if it was the head of an elephant. Another Boer had asked me a few days before if a crocodile's head, which was tied up at the back of Carollus's waggon, belonged to an elephant. In the afternoon, as we were inspanning, we were visited by a rebel Boer of very large proportions. This man told us plainly that the Boers did not consider themselves as conquered, and that they intended to try it on again.

We had now reached that point in our line of march where we were to take leave of the Vet River. I rode ahead of the waggons to hunt, and after proceeding about a mile, I found myself out of the country of sweet grass, and entering upon bare and boundless open plains, thinly clad with sour pasturage, the favourite haunt and continual residence of innumerable herds of black wildebeest, blesbok, and springbok. As I rode on, large troops of these excellent, sport-yielding antelopes gratified my eyes in every direction. I had been long away from them, far, far in the dense forest regions of the far interior, and now I gazed once more upon them with a lively feeling of pleasure and intense interest which no words can describe.

When the sun rose next morning I took coffee, and then rode west with two after-riders, in the hope of getting some blesbok-shooting. I found the boundless undulating plains thickly covered with game, thousands upon thousands chequering the landscape far as the eye could strain in every direction. The blesboks, which I was most desirous to obtain, were extremely wary, and kept pouring on, on, up the wind in long-continued streams of thousands, so swift and shy that it was impossible to get within six hundred yards of them, or even by any stratagem to waylay them, so boundless was the ground, and so cunningly did they avoid to cross our track.

I returned to camp, having bagged one springbok doe

and one old bull wildebeest, which was in superb condition. Jolly and some of my people had been out, but without success.

On the 28th I rode in a north-westerly course, and gave chase to a noble herd of about two hundred black wildebeest. These being very wild, I yached them on the Boer principle, and, taking a double family shot at about three hundred yards, when the dust had blown past one fine bull was found to have bitten the dust: this was very near camp, so I despatched Ruyter for men and a pack-ox to bring the gnou to camp. I held on in a westerly course, and found the game extremely shy, owing to the high wind.

In the afternoon I inspanned and marched, there being very little grass here for my cattle, and danger of the oxen taking a horrible and very fatal illness, called by the Boers "snot sickness," which cattle are very liable to from pasturing on ground frequented by black wildebeests. The sky to the north and west looked very threatening, and, before we had proceeded far, black masses of clouds came rolling up towards us, and vivid flashes of forked lightning, accompanied by appalling peals of thunder, proclaimed the approach of a storm. In a few minutes it was upon us, the rain falling in torrents. We held for a rocky coppice or hill, beside which we outspanned, and in about an hour the storm had passed away: vast herds of game surrounded us on every side.

Next day we marched, the country being very heavy for the bullocks, owing to the rain which had fallen. I held across country for a range of stony hills, dotted over with dwarfish trees and bushes, on which I expected to find sweet grass for my cattle. On my way thither the plains on every side of us presented the most lively display of game, and I was tempted by the endless streams of blesboks to halt my waggons for a minute to catch and saddle steeds and give them chase. They proved extremely shy, and in about four hours I rode to seek my waggons, having bagged a gnoo and a brace of blesboks.

While following the game one of my after-riders started an ostrich from her nest, which she had scooped in the sand: it was about seven feet in diameter, and contained thirty-four fine fresh eggs. I left Ruyter in charge of the nest, the eggs being in danger from jackals and vultures, and particularly from the ostrich herself, who would return in our absence and break every one of them. Having reached my camp, I despatched two men with leather sacks to fetch them.

Next morning I again rode forth to hunt on the plains below my camp, and took up positions, lying on my breast behind the anthills, while Booi and Ruyter moved up the game towards me. I had some exciting sport, the wildebeests several times coming charging madly down upon the very spot where I lay concealed. About midday I had bagged two old bulls, and found one of the wounded

of the day before : he was still warm, and was in first-rate condition. Several thousand blesboks came pouring up wind between me and my camp as I was riding home : these had probably been hunted up by some Boer or Boers to leeward. In the evening I again rode out, and had the game moved toward me, when I shot a fourth old bull wildebeest, for which I despatched men with a pack-ox by moonlight, having left Booï in charge of the venison.

On the 1st of February we marched, and reached Bloem Vonteyn on the 3rd, where I was kindly received by the officers of the 45th and Cape Corps, stationed there. Here we remained a day or two, and then trekked on through a most desolate country, on which, together with vast herds of wildebeest, blesbok, and springbok, we found numbers of skeletons scattered over the plains on all sides. This great mortality had been caused either by famine or by a horrid mangy disease, called by the Dutch "brunt sickta," which often sweeps off whole hosts of the plain-frequenting game.

On the 17th we halted the waggons at Mr. Fossey's farm, within two miles of the Great Orange River. Mr. Fossey informed me that the river was full, and that he did not expect it would be fordable for several months. Norval's Punt had been smashed when the troops crossed over to fight the Boers at Boom Plaats some months before, and the new one constructed in the colony had

not yet arrived. I was detained on the banks of this stream, much against my will, for several weeks; but at length, on the 8th of March, hearing that the Boers had constructed a float above Alleman's Drift, I inspanned and proceeded down the river to view it. The float was rather a dangerous affair—I mean for property—the stream being very rapid and deep. It was calculated to ferry over light waggons, but heavily-laden ones required to be off-loaded. At sundown I had taken over one waggon, and a span of twelve oxen, which I ferried across in two trips, taking six at a time.

Next morning when I awoke and looked to the river I found that it had grown greatly during the night, and was still increasing rapidly. Having off-loaded the greater part of the cargo of old Adonis's waggon, I managed to ferry it across the river, having narrowly escaped losing the whole in the middle of the stream. By this time the flood had increased so much that we deemed it dangerous to attempt to ferry over anything else, and we prudently resolved to await the ebbing of the river, which continued to grow rapidly the whole of the day. In the afternoon I was obliged to inspan the waggon which I had brought through on the preceding day, and remove it to a more elevated locality; and it was well that I did so, for before morning the river was running strong and deep on the ground which it had occupied. I entertained considerable apprehension

for my waggons on the opposite side of the river, as they were now standing upon an island, and the flood had already nearly reached to their wheels.

The flood continued to increase steadily until the next afternoon, when it seemed to have reached its maximum, and about sundown it was evidently upon the ebb. During the whole of to-day and yesterday the flood presented an appearance of extreme grandeur; large blocks of wood and trunks of forest-trees were constantly sweeping past us, tossed on the troubled waters on their seaward course. In the course of the afternoon the stout new cable by which the float was worked, and which stretched across the river, each end being secured to a rock-rifted trunk of a tree, burst asunder, being unequal to resist the force of the swollen river.

On the 14th, with much difficulty, we got over the cable by which the raft was worked, and the Boers, by way of experiment, loaded her up with a party of Bechuana Caffres, and endeavoured to cross the river. There was a small boat attached to the float. When they had got about half-way across, the water rose partially over the float, when a panic came over both the Boers and Bechuanas, and a rush was made into the little boat. A capsizing was the consequence; and at the same moment the rope which attached the boat to the float parted. The unfortunate men were then swept away down the rapid current; and of twenty-seven men

who were on board of the punt, four only escaped. Two of those who were drowned were Boers. After this accident I directed my men, who were in an isolated position on the opposite side of the river, to inspan and remove down to Norval's boat, below Alleman's Drift, where I met them with the cap-tent waggon; and at sundown next day we had safely ferried over the other two waggons, and encamped once more on British territory.

The ferrying was a very laborious proceeding, each waggon having to be off-loaded, and then taken to pieces, and so brought over, bit by bit; the oxen and horses, &c., swam the river. My waggons were now all safely across, so, after loading them, we marched on the 18th about ten A.M. At sundown we entered the town of Colesberg, and drew up opposite to the old barracks, having been absent exactly twelve months.

As my waggons advanced into the town, the news of our arrival spread like wildfire, and multitudes both of men and good-looking young women rushed to see the old elephant-hunter, who had been mourned as dead. We were soon surrounded by nearly one-half of the population, who mobbed us until night setting in dispersed them to their homes.

My friend Mr. Orpen, being blessed by nature with an excellent constitution, had considerably recovered from the dreadful wounds which he received from the leopard on the banks of the Limpopo, but was still, I regret to

say, obliged to carry his arms in slings. His father, the Rev. Dr. Orpen of Colesbery, informed me that he had great hope of restoring his arms to their former state, even at that late period, but of this I could not help being very doubtful.

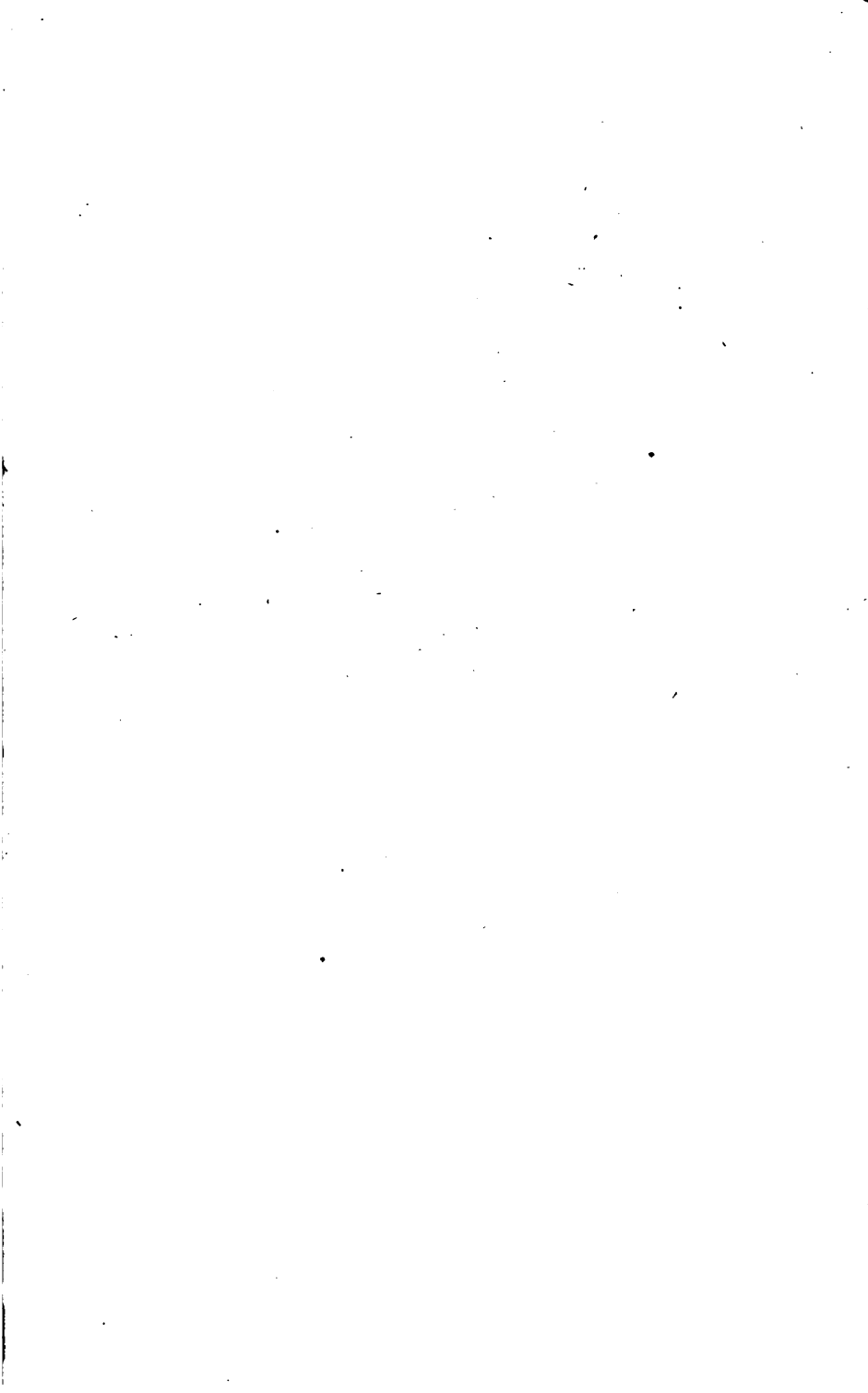
During my stay in Colesberg I had much pleasure in meeting my friend Mr. Oswell, of the Honourable East India Company's Service. He was then *en route* for the far interior, intending to penetrate the Kalihari in a north-westerly direction, and visit the lake of boats. This was an expedition which I myself had often thought of making, but a limited finance, and my fancy for collecting objects of natural history, led me to incline my course to the more verdant forests of the east, where I deemed I could more certainly first collect, and then export, the precious spoils of the elephant. Mr. Oswell being in want of draught oxen, I permitted him to select as many as he required from my extensive stock, with which he shortly set out, in company with Mr. Murray, on his interesting journey of discovery. I was occupied in Colesberg till the 12th of April, when I marched to "Cuil Vonteyn," a farm belonging to a Mrs. Van Blerk, which I reached in about three hours; the country all karroo, herds of springboks feeding in sight of the house. Here I found nine heavily-laden waggons drawn up, which I had hired and laden up to transport my collection of hunting trophies to the sea. When I entered Coles-

berg I had almost made up my mind to make another shooting expedition into the interior; but a combination of circumstances induced me at length to leave Africa for a season, and re-visit my native land. I felt much sorrow and reluctance in coming to this resolution; for although I had now spent the greater part of five seasons in hunting in the far interior the various game of Southern Africa, I nevertheless did not feel in the slightest degree satiated with the sport which it afforded. On the contrary, the wild, free, healthy, roaming life of a hunter had grown upon me, and I loved it more and more. I could not help confessing to myself, however, that in the most laborious yet noble pursuit of elephant-hunting I was over-taxing my frame and too rapidly wearing down my constitution. Moreover, the time required to reach those extremely distant lands frequented by the elephant was so great that it consumed nearly one-half of the season in going and returning, and I ever found that my dogs and horses had lost much of their spirit by the time they reached those very remote districts. My nerves and constitution were considerably shaken by the power of a scorching African sun, and I considered that a voyage to England would greatly recruit my powers, and that on returning I should renew my pursuits with increased zest.

Having thus resolved to leave the colony, I directed my march towards Port Elizabeth, by way of Graff Rei-

nett, crossing the bold mountain range of Snewberg. On the 10th of May I reached the shores of the ocean, which Ruyter and others of my followers, now beholding for the first time, gazed upon with wonder and with awe. On the 19th I took my passage for old England in the barque "Augusta." My valuable collection of trophies and my Cape waggon, weighing all together upwards of thirty tons, were then carefully shipped, and on the 7th of June I set sail (my little Bushman accompanying me) for my native land, after a sojourn of nearly five years in the wild hunting-grounds of Southern Africa.

THE END.





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